

HARRY'S BIG BOOTS



S. E. GAY



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Laura A. White



‘IT WAS THE PRINCESS ONDINE.’—Page 62.

HARRY'S BIG BOOTS.

A Fairy Tale.



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

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HARRY'S BIG BOOTS.

A Fairy Tale, for "Smalle Folke."

By S. E. GAY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR,
DRAWN ON WOOD BY PERCIVAL SKELTON.

Brief bee-like flights in search of pleasure bent,
"From blossoms wild, of fancies innocent."



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1874.

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PREFACE.

THERE needs no "Author's apology" for aught written for the young. The mind of childhood contains no criticism; it enjoys: the heart of childhood possesses no cynicism; it believes. It would seem thus a wasteful weariness to give a recondite meaning to what will be received with a single-hearted simplicity, were it not that a parable may ever be either a tale or a sermon, losing nothing of the sweetness of the first for the earnestness of the latter.

I am indebted to accounts of that most wondrous process of Deep-Sea Dredging for the fancied freaks of a "Miss Willowy-Billow" and a "Miss Wavy-Cavey";—to any floating fragment of modern science, for the desert land of Rory-Tory Island

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with its weird inhabitant;—to a note or two of the minor key in the chords of life, for the brief suggestion of Shadow-land.

Wearied in spirit, these little fairy-flights of mingled fact and fancy have been woven together by my desultory pen as a recreation and a solace from hour to hour. My only wish in rendering them up to the sterner custody of print, is to make some little child laugh.

S. E. G.

October, 1873.

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HARRY'S BIG BOOTS.

CHAPTER I.

HOW HE FOUND THEM.

It was a summer afternoon. The spot was charming,—a little glade by a brook-side, carpeted with grass, softer than green velvet, as soft as only the very softest moss can be, decked gaily, too, with blue forget-me-nots and yellow buttercups, and overhung by the broad sprays of beech-branches, which stretched out their long arms from the stately trees which grew around. It was almost like a bower, but a great deal prettier than any artificial bower could be, because it allowed the sunshine to come streaming through in bright gleams, till it fell on the

brown water of the brook, and sent all the little trout in it to sleep. They had been very much frightened a moment or two before, for Harry had brought his fishing-rod,—*he* well knew all the nicest spots in the wood,—and had nearly succeeded in catching the biggest of them all. No wonder. He was such a silly fish, and felt so sure that nice tempting bait was intended especially to please him; it looked so delicious, just like a piece of toffy with almonds in it, or a piece of plum-cake, would have been to Harry; and as for the “hook” that he had heard such a lot of old tales about, why he didn’t believe a word of it, or at any rate he shouldn’t believe it till he saw it. So he swam straight off to the feast, and was just going to commence operations when it gave a great jerk, and at the same time all the other little fishes cried out “Oh, don’t!” in such an appealing and pathetic style that it gave him a fright, and he darted off under the roots of the green grass, and hid for a long while, throbbing all over and fanning himself with one fin to try to recover himself. The fact was, at that

very moment Eliza, the nurse, had arrived on the scene with Harry's little dot of a sister, Lily; and as they came crashing through the boughs quite suddenly,—for you could not see anybody in this snug little spot till they came right into it,—it had startled Harry, and he moved his rod just as the foolish big trout was going to nibble.

“There!” said Harry, “you’ve made me lose my trout, and now it’s of no use fishing any more, so I shall go to sleep,” saying which, he threw down his rod and line and stretched himself out at full length on the mossy bank, with his hat over his eyes, and pretended he was quite lost to the world around him. I say *pretended*, as Harry, like many other young folks, was fond of “making-believe” to do things—why, I don’t know—and he fancied there was some kind of merit attached to the fact that he, being supposed asleep, should take no notice whatever of the conversation of Eliza and his little sister. It was rather hard work, however. Lily, having gathered as many flowers as her little hands could hold, stole over to brother Harry, to see if he *would*

“wake-up” and help to amuse her. She lifted up his hat and peeped underneath; and it was as much as Harry could do to keep grave, but he would not have laughed for the world; and then she stuck buttercups into all the button-holes of his coat and waistcoat, till he looked like a May Queen gone mad. He longed to say “Don’t, Lily,” only it would have been undignified; but he began to find the flies and gnats worse “teasers” still; they hummed incessantly right over his very nose, and now and then one would settle on it and tickle dreadfully. It was all poor Harry could do to endure it; but then the glory of remaining like a wax image! Like some other people, he liked to imagine he was doing a duty when in reality he was only making himself uncomfortable. If it *had* been a duty, I am not at all so sure Master Harry would have been quite so brave about it. At last, when he was beginning to wonder how long he should have to “keep on,” whiz! came a great *bumble-bee* right into his ear, which it evidently mistook for a flower, as it kept buzzing and whizzing

there, and trying to get inside, as if it was a matter of life and death for it. Up sprang Harry, and shook himself tremendously, screaming out "Oh!" and "Bother!" as if he were very much frightened, but in reality rather glad to be relieved from his self-imposed "duties," and quite ready to enjoy a new lease of life and fishing. Down fell all his fringes of buttercups, away darted all the little trout, and Lily danced a mad little dance of joy round him, which, as she was not particularly careful where she was going, or what was the condition of her outer garments, ended in her tumbling down *very* near the brook, and *quite* losing her loosely-tied hat, which fell into it. The hat seemed determined, now it had "gone and been and done it," to enjoy itself as well as it could under the circumstances, and prepared in consequence for a nice jaunt ever so far down the brook; *only*, just as it was beginning to swim, it didn't see where it was going, and the brook spitefully sent it up against a large stone, and kept it there. "*Squish!*" was all it said, and then it dole-

fully filled half full of water, and looked as if it was going to sink down and faint away on the spot. It began then to remember its dear little mistress, and felt rather sorry it had been in such a hurry to leave her and see life. Though she *did* bang it about a little, and hold it dangling by the strings, and had certainly once or twice sat upon it by mistake, still it knew she meant kindly and hadn't seriously intended ever to do it an injury. These were sad thoughts. As for Lily, her two little round blue eyes sparkled with a little diamond tear, one in each eye; and they were preparing to keep company down her rosy cheeks when a loud "hurrah!" from Harry frightened them back again into their two little houses, and sent a thrill of hope right through every fibre of the drowning hat. The fact was, Master Harry was very busy taking off his shoes and stockings as fast as ever he could, thinking it tremendous fun to have a paddle—a regular "good time" in the brook. Old Eliza reminded "Master Harry" that it was "only three months since he had had the measles." "I wouldn't

go in that there brook," added she, "if you'd *pay* me—full of horrid live things which may bite you, not to say but you'll stick in the mud, and then *I* shan't pull you out." Eliza always said that. According to her, nobody had ever been helped if she had once "told them so" in her life; it was very funny, too, but quite true, that she always helped more people out of their scrapes than anybody else. However, Harry managed to remember that somebody had said sometime that cold water was the best thing in the world when you were recovering from the measles; and as for the "things" in the brook, they were much more likely to be afraid of him than he should be of them, and so forth. Accordingly he gave a great jump, and went—splash!—into the very middle, and waded till he came to the spot where the hat was, and caught fast hold of it. "Oh, how glad I am!" exclaimed the hat to itself; "I was just fainting away! In fact, I should have died half a minute later." All this, however, sounded only just like "*screeze—squilch*," as Harry took it up and squeezed the water out of it. Then

he waded back again opposite Lily, and threw it at her. "O I'm a bird, I'm flying!" cried the vain old hat, and then it alighted helplessly at her feet, where, let us hope, it settled down in a more becoming spirit. Poor Eliza now urged Master Harry to come ashore, but he wouldn't: it was so delightful being in the water and doing what you liked in it, which you couldn't on dry land; and, besides, he could now, perhaps, catch the big trout with his net, and that would be a great advantage. The trout, however, were far too dismayed even to think of the most enticing supper that could be placed before a fish. At the first sight of Harry's pink legs, they had all huddled away ever so far up the brook, screaming, "Oh, how dreadful!" and "Do let us hide!" till they found a nice quiet pool to rest in. The big trout felt particularly put out of countenance, and as soon as he found himself safely surrounded by his companions gave them a piece of his mind.

"I always thought," said he, "that the two-legged creatures dwelt on land. Now that they have taken to the water, it will be

quite dangerous to go out. What are the times coming to?"

Meanwhile, Harry, who found his trout had fled, and felt the water rather too cold to be pleasant, had landed near a large stone, bleached white with many a winter's flood and summer's ripple, and here and there patched with beautiful little tufts of moss, with the idea of walking back on the bank till he rejoined his nurse, Eliza, and his little sister. He had not pushed his way through the long grass and overhanging branches very far before he came upon an old-fashioned pair of high boots, much the worse for wear, but still wearable, and which seemed of all others the very thing for wading. "A fairy must have put them there," cried he. "Now I shall be able to wade whenever I like." Whereupon he seated himself on the bank and took up one to look at. Directly he touched it, it gave a little hop. "How funny!" thought Harry; but he did not feel in the least alarmed. Then the other gave a little hop, too; and then with one voice they both began to speak. "We are the

celebrated Seven-league Boots," they cried both in a breath; "and if you put us on, we will take you ever so far—right round the world and back again, and show you all kinds of strange and curious things which you would never think of."

"All right," said Harry, "there's nothing I should like better. I shall have jolly long holidays now, and I think it will be awful fun, only"—here he felt a little bit low-spirited—"I think I should like to say good-bye first to Lily and Mamma and Eliza. They would wonder where I was."

"We can do this on our way," replied the Boots, in a most condescending manner; "only put us on, as it's high time we were on our travels, and we have been idling a long while here by this stone. We can go nowhere without legs, though you might think we were quite independent, and legs could go nowhere without us. It's rather a nuisance," added the right Boot reflectively, "but it is the natural consequence of a foolish state of things. It will be all right when we—"

"When what? Are worn out?" asked Harry, curiously.

"When," said the Boots, yawning tremendously, "we get to the other end of everywhere." Upon this they yawned more and more till they looked as if they were going to swallow up poor Harry, who, however, made the best of it, and, showing a firm front, gave each of them a little kick, which they took advantage of to fasten firmly on to his legs. They were rather big, certainly, in the upper part, but they contracted below till they fitted his feet to a nicety; and *what* an advantage it was to have not only a pair of "grown-up" big Boots, but Boots that were so sagacious and contriving that they knew how to go round the world! Never had Harry felt so elated before. The fishing-rod, the big trout, and the pretty glade in the wood were all alike forgotten.

CHAPTER II.

OUT INTO THE GREAT WORLD.

“WHICH is the way?” asked the Boots. “To the left,” answered Harry, and they immediately gave a great skip, which took him straight to his Mamma and Lily, who had been taken home by Eliza, and had had her hat well dried by the fire. Never before had Harry gone such a long way with so little trouble; it was delightful. He had only to say he wanted to go somewhere, and hop! off went the Boots like twenty prize race-horses knocked into one, which would make something *almost* as strong as a steam-engine. His Mamma didn’t seem in the least surprised. She was sitting by the drawing-room window working, and when she saw Harry and he told her he was going

round the world, she only said, "Mind you're back in time for tea," in the most natural manner possible, and went on sewing. Harry then told the Boots to take him "into the world," and felt very grand as he said so. He had very vague notions as to what it was; it came first in his atlas he knew, and meant there Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; but he had heard the clergyman in church say that we were not to think about "the world," which seemed contradictory, as he had most decidedly to choose between thinking about it or getting a thrashing from Mr. Coachwell, his school-master; and, finally, his Mamma had often told him that when he grew up he would have to go into the world, and he must try to be a wise, good man, as there were a great many "snares" in it for foolish people. Harry thought that snares meant something like bird-traps, put to *catch* you, so that altogether, what with the might-be thrashings and large bird-traps, the world seemed but a sorry sort of place, and his ideas on the subject were very confused, poor fellow.

Still, having heard about it, he naturally felt a little curious, and then the Boots had indicated to him there were "a great many things to be seen, and, besides, if he didn't see the world, where *was* he to go and what *was* he to see?"

The Boots, however, stood quite still, much to his discomfiture, and never gave the least little bit of a tiny hop in any direction.

"Why don't you go?" asked Harry, in dismay, and thinking they had taken him in after all, and couldn't go nearly so far as they made out.

"Because you're *in* it," replied the Boots. Harry felt fairly puzzled. Was he in the map, after all?—and where were the snares? he didn't see any,—and ought he to think about where he was? O dear, how puzzling it was! "I don't understand you," he exclaimed, in very disappointed tones; "please explain."

"Why, all that you see is the world—all around you," cried the Boots, laughing; and giving one a great fling to the left, and the

other a great fling to the right. "What we promised was to show you some queer things in different parts of it that you've never seen before."

"Well, then, take me at once," exclaimed Harry; "I am longing to see something wonderful, and you know I have to be back in time for tea."

Hop! whiz! whirr!—away flew the Boots, without another word. Oh, how fast they went—past towns and villages, and fields full of cows and sheep—it was just like being in a railway train, only ever so much nicer, as, if there was anything interesting to see, Harry had only to tell the Boots, and stop to see it. He, however, did not say anything till after the hop seemed to have lasted a long while, and carried them a great way, and then he inquired of the Boots where they were going to in particular.

"To Rory-Tory Island," said the Boots; "we shall soon get there. It's the funniest place in the world." And presently, in truth, they left the land altogether, and scudded at a great rate through the air, and high over

the sea, which looked so deliciously blue that Harry was tempted to stop and propose they should take a dip in it, as he had often heard it was full of wonderful things; but the Boots replied that they would go there afterwards, and that they had been there once before, and instead of being quite cold and pitch-black, a long way down it was most pleasant; and as for the society, it was charming. Harry's attention was now arrested by the sight of a dull, dim, flat, sandy-looking patch beginning to spread out like a map towards the horizon; and as they came nearer, he saw it was a large low island, without so much as a bush or a tree on it, and nothing in the world that was in the least pretty to be seen. He felt almost indignant with the Boots for bringing him such a long way to see nothing, and he *did* say to them that it seemed very uninteresting; to which the Boots replied, that this was the well-known Rory-Tory Island, and that it contained a very wonderful sight, as he would see if he had only patience to walk quietly—as they wanted a rest—up the beach to the place

where it was to be found. Accordingly they landed, and Harry, guided by the Boots, who were panting a good deal, and creaked dreadfully, wound his way over a long reach of round pebbles, all exactly alike, up to some sand-hills, which were very small and all of precisely the same size and pattern, too. He went up and down, and up and down, a great many times, till he began to feel quite tired (for the Boots could only help him a little till they had quite recovered from their fatigue), and wondered when he *should* get to the end of them. At last, just as he was beginning to feel rather cross again, they came to a large flat space, all sand, in the midst of which was built a small stone pyramid, on the top of which was seated a very queer-looking old man. It *was* an odd sight, and so Harry thought. As they came up to him he seemed to recognize the Boots, and said, "How d'ye do" to them very affably, but he took no notice of Harry. The Boots then approached close enough for Harry to have a good view of him, and commenced a conversation. "How do you feel?" they asked.

"Much the same," replied the queer-looking old man, "only rather drier than usual. But the view is lovely, and that keeps my spirits up."

Harry didn't agree with this at all, but he didn't like to question it, especially as it would, perhaps, have the effect of taking away the only solace that the poor old man seemed to have, so he asked the Boots in a whisper who he was, and if he always sat on the pyramid. "Why, he's the great Evolution-man," they replied, also in a whisper; and then correcting themselves, explained—"The man who has grown out of the pyramid. He's called Primitive Prim in consequence. Look here"; and with that they marched round to the other side of the pyramid, and Harry saw a little hole, with a little iron spade hung up on a hook close by, and a pair of spectacles. "He found out the story in the hole, so he says. A lot of little things inside the hole came out and chattered in their language that they remembered him when he was just like them—poor little creeping periwinkles; but

I think it was their vanity, don't you? But you ask him all about it. He'll be sure to tell you, as he is very proud of the discovery, strange to say, and is fond of talking about it."

Harry couldn't imagine how anybody could be proud of having been a periwinkle, though a periwinkle might like to think it could grow into a man, but he plucked up courage to face the old fellow, and ask him a few things.

Primitive Prim shook his ancient grey beard and rubbed his bald head, and looked at him very solemnly, saying, "Take care what you say to me; I'm a very venerable being. I've been here for ages, and have come up gradually out of the pyramid, which is very clever of me."

"How do you know you did?" asked Harry; "and what makes you so fond of being here?"

"The periwinkles," replied Primitive Prim, "who have been extremely kind, or I shouldn't be as wise as I am now, informed me that they had bones inside them, and a

pair of eyes for seeing with; and as I have too, it is quite clear I must have been a periwinkle myself once; only I fortunately crawled outside, and the moon shone on me, so that I grew bigger and bigger, till I became the important creature you see before you."

"I didn't think moonshine was good for anything," said the Boots, in a whisper; "but don't you tell him so."

"I don't remember all this," said the old fellow, yawning, "but the winkles do, and they often remind me of our old play-days together. They say I was cross at first when I lost my shell; and then, when I put on my spectacles, I saw their eyes staring at me, so that as I had eyes too, and felt my bones ache,—which at my time of life have become much modified, that is, changed, you know, by sitting on the pyramid and kicking my heels about,—I saw no reason to doubt their story. I *must* have come from *somewhere*."

"Dear me!" cried Harry; "well this is a queer thing; and how did the little peri-

winkles get there? From the sea, I suppose; they generally stick fast where they find stones."

"O, no; not at all," replied Primitive Prim; "some of the stones of the pyramid got jumbled together somehow, and made a powder which grew into winkles of its own accord."

"How knowing!" exclaimed Harry; "why, now I think of it, it seems the most likely thing in the world. Of course! Only, how did the pyramid come here to begin with, and what's the meaning of it? It *looks* as if it meant something, and had been done by somebody."

"I have examined that too with my spectacles," replied Primitive Prim, "and I think it's made of fog, baked hard. I expect the sun did it."

"Why," said Harry, "then *you* must be made of fog, after all!"

Primitive Prim wagged his head very ferociously at this, and replied, "I am a very venerable old man, and know a great deal about the pyramid. You're rather rude."

"So it seems," said saucy Harry; "but you admit you *are* fog, and of course your notions must be foggy!"

"This is unseemly," rejoined Primitive Prim; "if I were not so stiff in the joints I should get off my pyramid and thrash you with my spectacles." Harry thought that it would be bad for the spectacles, but he didn't say so, and he ventured to inquire, in a tone more befitting the venerable Prim's solemn demeanour, "how long he meant to stay there?" and "what his prospects were generally?"

"I can't say how long I may sit here," he replied, rather more pleasantly; "but I *may* gradually turn back into a large periwinkle again; and if I am able to curl round, I shall make a very respectable fossil."

"Oh!" said Harry; "and then I suppose you'll go back into the powder, and after that into the fog."

"Just so," replied Primitive Prim, in an animated manner. "Ah! it's a grand idea, turning from a wrinkle to a primitive old person like me, and from a primitive old

party back again to a winkle, with a prospect of being a curled-up fossil into the bargain ! I'm going to take a nap over the idea." So saying, he suddenly gave a sort of neat wriggle, till nothing was to be seen of him but his venerable bald pate, and his two venerable feet, having skilfully adapted himself to a large hole in the pyramid much to his intense satisfaction. Just as he was muffling himself up for his doze, he squeaked out — "If you pass by this way again, come and see me as a fossil ! I *shall* be a sight then !"

Harry and the Boots thought so too, and with one joyful skip of relief, and a great "whiz," they fled apace from Rory-Tory Island !

CHAPTER III.

OVER THE BLUE SEA.

AWAY they flew! far over the desert sand-hills and the pebbly beach, far over the blue salt waves and up into the soft blue sky, till Primitive Prim's melancholy island became as a dim purple cloud on the verge of the horizon, set about everywhere by the voiceful borders of the far-spreading sea.

It seemed half sad to Harry to leave the poor old man thus desolate in his tiny desert world, where never a bird came with glad note and joyous wing to sing its song to him, and never a flower raised its rosy crest to gladden his feeble eyes. He could not help giving utterance to his thoughts as they flew along, and asked the Boots with wonder why he seemed so contented with his lot,



THEY FLEW OVER THE BLUE SEA.—Page 24.



and how it was the island was so bleak and ugly and barren.

“Don’t pity him,” replied the Boots; “he does not see things as you do; nobody who was so fond of an ugly old pyramid, and believed they belonged to it so completely, ever could. If he had ever such a quantity of beautiful flowers and birds and trees and pleasant sights and sounds, it would make no difference to him. He would only think they were like himself, pieces of the pyramid that had happened to grow somewhere else, and he would not care for them as people do who see things as they are, which is the best way to see them if they are to make us happy. He *would* go and live in that dreary island all alone, and he likes it better than anything else; so the best way is not to interfere with him, and to let him find out how dull it is after he has been there a good long while.”

Away they flew!—they had got a long way above the sea now, and it seemed to Harry as if they were going to pay a visit to the moon; so at last he said, “Do you know, I

think we are going to the moon, and it will be very much out of our way, and I'm afraid mamma will be angry."

"The *moon*; oh, dear, no," cried the Boots; "why, it's ever so many hundred miles off yet, perhaps more. We could not go there without a portmanteau full of our best clothes, as we should have to make a long visit."

"I thought," said Harry, "you never went more than seven leagues at a time. How is it you take such *very* big long hops now? I have read about the Seven-league Boots, and they couldn't go half so far as you do."

"We are *descended* from the original Seven-league Boots," replied the Boots, with natural pride, "and keep up the name, but we have much improved on our great-grandfathers, as our family have always adapted themselves to the times, which required us to go a *great* deal quicker than they did. If they hadn't, I expect by this time we should have died out altogether in an old lumber-room."

"Well," said Harry, who grew more and

more surprised at the newly displayed powers of the Boots, "suppose we don't fly quite so high. I seem to be getting quite giddy and out of breath, and besides, I like to look at the sea and the big waves, and watch the great sea-gulls dipping their bills and ducking into the water."

"All right," rejoined the amiable Boots, and down they came, nearer and nearer to the blue sea, over which they were hastening, till at last Harry almost thought they should tumble into it. As they came closer, he beheld a little dark speck floating on the water in the distance, which soon appeared to be a dear little ship, with a string tied to it, which went down into the water.

"Oh, how I should like to take it home and sail it on the pond!" cried Harry; "do, pray, let us stop and have a look at it!" Upon this the Boots settled quite quietly down on the top of a big wave which was rolling straight towards it, so that they had a good rest, and Harry a capital view of all that was going on. It turned out to be bigger than it looked, and wasn't exactly a toy-ship.

after all, for there were a good many people on board, who seemed to be very busy. As Harry came closer, he was able to see what they were doing. He saw several charming old gentlemen poking at a mass of mud which lay on the deck, and every now and then they said, "Oh, what a duck! What a beauty! How glad we are to see you! Do come in and take off your things!" and carefully fished out something from the midst of the pile, which they placed on a large washstand. Harry thought from this they must be some valuable kind of pearls, and he was very much astonished when he came nearer still to find the washstand quite full of little brown dabs of sponges and a small sea-urchin or two. They were very neatly ranged all in a row. As soon as the old gentlemen had found all they could, they flew to the washstand, and commenced scrubbing these poor little things with some tooth-brushes, in four or five large basins of water (once or twice the sea-urchins squeaked out, as it was not the sort of thing they had been accustomed to, and they were rather frightened, but the

old gentlemen said "Hush!" in such a pleasant, kind manner, and promised them so sweetly that they should be labelled and go to the British Museum as soon as ever it could be managed, that they felt quite reassured); and after they had been scrubbed till they shone, their kind hosts provided several little houses full of water for them to live in, and tucked them up in bed, and wished them good-night. On the outside of the houses, which were made of transparent glass, was written "Nice Pickling Inside." So I suppose the sponges and all the little sea-urchins were pickled.

"Why do they do this?" asked Harry; "and what is it for?"

"Well," said the Boots, "they want to know who lives at the bottom of the sea now, as they think the inhabitants may be, after all, nice respectable little people; so they send down a large bag, with an invitation to the best sea-urchins and their families to pay a visit to their ship for change of scene and air, and you see these are among the number who have accepted."

"But suppose," said Harry, "the *very* nicest shouldn't come; and they would never know, it's such a long way off. Don't you think if you wanted to see the people who live in the sea, the best way would be to go there?"

"Certainly," replied Boots; "but then you see there are different names for things. The old gentlemen aren't fitted to take such long journeys, and giving an invitation to the sea-urchins they call Science; but if the sea-urchins were to invite *them*, and *they* were to go, they would call that Drowning, and the two things are not exactly alike."

"So this is Science," said Harry, sighing. "I think it must be very dull for the sea-urchins who accept, always being washed and then put to bed. Do they never do anything else?"

"No; never," replied the Boots.

"Then," said Harry, "let *us* do something new, and pay a visit to them. You promised to show me all the wonderful things there are ever so far down, right at the bottom of the deep sea."

“Very well,” said the Boots; “but first I must make ‘inquiries of the Sea-gull who is swimming towards us, and ask whether the water is pretty comfortable to-day; sometimes it isn’t at all. Hi! Mr. Sea-gull, how is it going with *you* now? Has any news come up lately from your part of the world?”

The Sea-gull swam up quite slowly, pursed up his bill, and looked in the air, first to the right and then to the left. “H’m!” said he, “I think you might venture, if you’re thinking of diving. Might be worse, you know. Great nuisance this teasing little vessel, isn’t it? It’s frightened away—upon my word, I don’t exaggerate in the least — no less than eleven as good fat fish as you’d wish to eat for your Sunday dinner, and just as they were right under my very nose. I’m going to take a weed now, to console myself; good-bye.” So saying, he picked up a piece of floating sea-weed, stuck it on one side in his pert little bill, and pretending to puff a great deal, paddled off, smoking, as he called it, at a great rate.

“What a conceited little fellow,” cried Harry, immensely amused. But he had hardly finished the speech before the Gull, who never could resist the temptation of hearing his own tongue wag, turned sharply round, and exclaimed, “They, over the way there,” pointing with his left wing to the vessel, “ought to be stopped—put down, you know. You’ve no idea what mischief they’re doing. Government ought to take it up. Why, an old porpoise, a great friend of mine, came to me this morning—this I assure you is a *fact*—half fainting with fright and as white as a sheet, and said she to me, ‘Well, of *all* the things, what do you think has happened now? I was taking my bath as usual this morning, and splashing about the water a great deal; which, I suppose, with my deafness, too, prevented me from hearing the horrid thing; when, just as I turned round, what should I hear—I was obliged to hear *then*—but the most fearful shriek, and *such* a puffing and blowing, from a horrid machine with black smoke coming out of its mouth. And

before I could get away, I saw it put down a dreadful claw, and heard it cry out, "Let's catch the old party." Oh, how I rushed away; and when I got quite out of sight of the creature, I was obliged to take brandy-and-water,—which, fortunately, I always keep in my pocket,—to help me to recover myself.' And she was palpitating even *then*," said the Gull, shaking his head in a most solemn manner. "I'm a bird of the world, and I know enough to tell me this sort of thing should be put down. On the first opportunity I mean to bring it before the Whales. A lash or two of *their* tails, and yonder little boat—I call it—would soon be upset. Have a weed? No?—then, good-bye, again." Saying which, he shook his left wing indignantly in the direction of the poor little ship, which was sailing peacefully on its way, and from whose terror-striking "mouth," as the porpoise described it, stole a little steaming cloud of white vapour, on which the rays of the setting sun fell, till it looked like a golden streamer bearing some mes-

sage of holiday fun—some glad message to poor overworked folk, who find such happy days too few and far between. Such as you may see, indeed, at the mastheads of all the ships on the Queen's birthday—a pretty sight, in sooth!

And as for the sea-urchins, they had certainly come a long way, and let us hope they were enjoying their visits in their new little houses in proportion to the expense and pains of their journey.

CHAPTER IV.

DOWN IN THE DEPTHS OF IT.

“Now then,” said the Boots, manfully, “you must go right head over heels and take a dive. We’ll stand on the tip-top of the highest wave you can see, and then you must jump straight off into the little valley alongside.”

So Harry *did* stand as he was directed, the Boots helping him to balance nicely, and not without some little feeling of wonder—we won’t say fright, for what was there to be afraid of in going to pay a visit to the people who lived in the beautiful caves down at the bottom of the blue sea, and who would be sure to be glad to see him, and hear the latest news from the upper world?—he gave a great jump and a plunge, and down they

went, just like an express train, whirling away further and further down into the beautiful cool waters. It was some time before Harry got accustomed to the bubbling noise in his ears, and the rushing, "swishing" sound they made in going at their usual terrific pace; but when he did, and had time to look around him, he found it vastly more pleasant than he could have imagined.

In the first place, instead of being dark and disagreeable, the sea was of the most lovely green-blue colour, but so transparent that it looked like a piece of stained-glass window when the sun shines through it; and instead of being darker, it grew lighter and brighter, and more beautiful, as they went down. Harry was surprised at this, and asked the Boots how it was there seemed so much sunshine in the sea; and they replied that he would see presently when they came near the Sun-fish. And true enough, they hadn't gone very much further down before the most dazzling golden light shone all around them; and looking towards the west, Harry saw a most brilliant creature, shaped

something like a fish, floating in the water, which had a body sparkling all over in shades of gold and blue and green, and two eyes like diamonds. Never had he seen such a wonderful sight before ; and in fact it's impossible to describe it, as the colours were more like what the chandelier makes on the wall on a sunny afternoon than anything else. Although it was a great way off, it seemed very large ; and Harry inquired, rather anxiously, of the Boots if there was any chance of its seeing them, and perhaps gobbling them up, as it was of such a size that it seemed as if it would often want a good meal. But the Boots replied that the Sun-fish always remained in the same spot, which was a great advantage to the inhabitants of the deep sea, as they had constant light, and could go to bed or stay up just as they chose, which was very convenient. The Boots also added that the Sun-fish was well known for his amiability, as Harry might see for himself in the affable countenance he possessed, and that he never ate up even the tiniest fish, but fed entirely on the choicest

sea-weeds, which were brought to him every day in large baskets by three good-natured Whales, who were fond of him, and considered he was an institution which ought to be supported.

And now Harry also noticed after they left the neighbourhood of the Sun-fish, and went still further down, that the sea became warmer and pleasanter each moment. It was most delicious, and tasted or felt, in some indescribable way, just like the sweetest roses and lilies smell; such charming "scents!"—where could they all come from? The Boots said that they were now getting very near Deep-Sea Town, and that it was caused by emanations from the beautiful groves which were planted all round it. And before Harry had time to wander about it any more,—lo and behold!—down they came into the midst of a wonderful region of arched rocks and waving branches, and beheld a number of people moving in and out of them in all directions, and trying to get out of their way. They landed in what was evidently the principal street, nearly

tumbling over a piece of cord, which looked big enough to be the chief clothes-line of the place; and ere Harry had recovered his surprise at all the new things around him, he found himself close by a group of mermaid young ladies, who were raising their voices to such a pitch and scolding one another so that they hadn't so much as seen him and the Boots flying down to them. They were evidently having a great altercation about something, so Harry thought it would be the best plan to stand still and listen, and the Boots quite agreed. The two who were making the most noise and raised their voices highest were two handsome young mermaids, one of which was seated in state upon something which looked like a large leather bag, with a fringe of tassels spread out behind, but which, it appeared, was a new carriage she had lately set up, and of which she was very proud, as it was considered the most stylish thing in Deep-Sea Town. Three cuttle-fish held fast to the fringes behind, and were evidently her black footmen, and a fat sea-urchin, with a fresh,

new livery on, sat just in the midst, and made a great show as coachman. The young lady herself was driving, and wore a blue and red whelk-shell on her head, which was the latest fashion in hats. She had a profusion of jet black hair, and a grand embroidered jacket and dress, but her face was quite red with anger, as she screamed out to the other young mermaid,—“*Will* you allow me to pass, Flora Wavy-Cavey? If not, I shall call a Shark”—(these are the policemen in Deep-Sea Town),—“and tell him you’re obstructing the street.”

“No more than *you* are,” retorted Miss Wavy-Cavey, with great wrath; “with your ridiculous big bag. Calling it a *waggonette*, indeed, and giving yourself such airs on it! Don’t you know you’re the laughing-stock of the place?”

“I don’t care if I am,” logically replied the other young lady, whose name was Dora Willowy-Billowy,—a pretty name, indeed,—“but I know I’m not half so much as *you* are. Your sea-horses are the most notorious old screws in the place, and quite worn out;

I felt quite ashamed the last time you came to call upon me,—I positively did! And now, if you don't object, I *think* I should like to go on."

"You shan't! I won't! It is mine; I saw it first!" screamed Miss Wavy-Cavey, whose profuse "back hair," comb and all, tumbled down with the energy of her proceedings, and sent floating off her smartest new bonnet trimmed with gold shells, and done up with the broadest satin-leaf ribbon; and upon this she jumped up by the side of Miss Willowy-Billowy, who nearly choked with indignation, but gave a faint cry of "Oh!" and "Shark!" and then endeavoured to settle the matter herself by giving Miss Wavy-Cavey a resounding slap. This of course only made matters worse, and they came to a regular scrimmage, in which Miss Wavy-Cavey, being the stronger of the two, seemed likely to get the best of it, when,—*oh!* what a shock to their feelings occurred,—the "clothes-line" became stretched *very* tight indeed, gave a great jerk, and without the least warning upset poor Miss Wavy-

Cavey and Dora Willowy-Billow, the three black footmen and scarlet coachman, all in a heap in the middle of the grandest promenade—in fact, the Rotten Row—of Deep-Sea Town! It then tugged at the waggonette till that surprising vehicle proceeded to sail aloft right up into the very sea above them. “Oh! oh! oh!” they cried, and that was all they could say. It was as sudden and unexpected as an earthquake. And then they all fainted quite away.

CHAPTER V.

MISS WILLOWY-BILLOWY AND MISS WAVY-CAVEY.

WHILE they were still unconscious, Harry, who began to understand matters a little, and to connect the eccentric movements of Miss Willowy-Billow's new waggonette with the occupation of the charming old gentlemen in the little vessel above, made inquiries, together with the Boots, as to who these young ladies were, and why they were so angry with each other.

The bystanders, who now consisted chiefly of stout old mermen and merboys, and one or two of the wives of the former, informed them that Miss Willowy-Billow and Miss Wavy-Cavey were considered the belles of the town, and were the daughters of two rich town-councillors, who lived in the handsomest

houses in Coral Grove, and that in consequence there was a good deal of rivalry between the young ladies; also that lately a new and mysterious species of carriage having been seen in the outskirts of the town, which the chief coach-maker declared he had made (though it was a "cram"), and that it was the height of the fashion, Miss Willowy-Billowy had rushed off and secured it about five minutes before Miss Wavy-Cavey arrived at the same spot. Hence the quarrel. The important fact regarding this "new carriage" was, that it went several times round the chief streets of Deep-Sea Town, and paraded in the Rotten Row of the place of its own accord; and though certainly it didn't always stop exactly where you wanted to shop, and sometimes proceeded persistently to the wrong houses and stood there, yet it excited a great sensation in the town, and was considered a very remarkable and fashionable turn-out. Miss Willowy-Billowy had been going about in it for a week, and it was supposed Miss Wavy-Cavey had got so jealous of all the admiration she excited that she stopped

her in the Row to give her a piece of her mind, and it had led to the outpouring of wrath, which, as you see, was only checked by the unexpected catastrophe which has just been described.

“And a good thing too,” said Mrs. Washey, a bustling, fine-looking merwoman of middle age. “If I swept out our shop-door, which you see, sir, is in the principal street,”—here she tossed her head in grand style,—“I swept it out twenty times of a morning, in consequence of that there drat of a waggionette. Such a dust and a dirt! The Sharks all told me it hadn’t ought to have been allowed,—but there, you might as soon turn the Sun-fish, as expect sense from that Miss Willowy-Billow—*a foolish, extravagant thing, with her new-fangled hats and airs and ways!* A *very* good thing it’s gone for good, and I hope we shall never see *he* no more.”

“*He*” meant the waggonette in Mrs. Washey’s language; and certainly that old dame had a good deal to complain of.

Meanwhile Miss Wavy-Cavey and Miss

Willowy-Billowy, having had a thorough good faint, thought better of it, and came to life simultaneously, rubbing their eyes a good deal, and fanning themselves with their pocket-handkerchiefs in a very die-away fashion.

“Are you better, dear?” asked Miss Wil-
lowy-Billowy, who, having lost her waggonette
beyond all hope of recovery, felt more gene-
rous sentiments animate her breast towards
Miss Wavy-Cavey than had reigned there a
short half-hour before. Miss Wavy-Cavey
replied that she thought she was, “but hor-
ridly shaken; in fact, she wasn’t sure there
wasn’t something amiss with her spine,—
she should see when she got home.”

“You know I didn’t mean to slap you,”
said Miss Willowy-Billowy, (but she *did* it all
the same,) “only you *were* very tiresome,
and I never mean half I say or do either.
Oh, dear, I wonder what has become of my
beautiful new bonnet that I paid such a lot
for! I believe it’s gone up in that dreadful,
horrid waggonette, and I wish I’d never seen
it, and I hope it’ll *never* come here again!”

cried she, in a most doleful tone, though leaving everybody in doubt as to whether she meant the bonnet or the "new carriage." Just at this moment a great noise was heard in the promenade close by, and a handsome carriage, formed of a large cockle-shell, beautifully fluted, and drawn by two spirited sea-horses of a gigantic species quite unknown in *our* shallow shores, drew up opposite to the scene of the accident, and a charming old merlady alighted, with an expression of the fondest affection and greatest concern depicted on her countenance; and with a great many "Oh, dears!" and sighings and pantings, folded her youthful daughter Dora to her motherly breast. "I'm so glad I've found you," cried she, rather incoherently; "I heard it all from the baker's boy, whose aunt's mother lives in the top floor of the second house in the street but one next this, and saw it all!—and oh, dear, how glad I am!—and why *did* you go with that queer girl? I always knew she'd bring you to an accident! I never liked her, she was always trying to imitate your best bonnets."

"No, she didn't, Ma," replied Dora, releasing herself from her dear mamma's arms, and remembering the slap with some little compunction; "it was I who did it, and I believe it belonged to her as much as to me. Besides, I wish you wouldn't say things *close by* like this, or Flora will hear, and think it so unkind."

Poor Flora Wavy-Cavey indeed *did* hear, but she was accustomed to Mrs. Willowy-Billowy, whom indeed she liked very much, as she had once nursed her through the measles, so that she did not mind particularly, not even when it wasn't true, which was quite the case as regarded the new bonnet, as Miss Wavy-Cavey was exceedingly proud of a new style she had invented herself, and which she considered showed much taste and skill, and the pattern of which she had in fact, in a sudden fit of affection, lent to Miss Willowy-Billowy. So that she was not surprised when that young lady's mamma turned round and suddenly said, "Oh, my dear! I hope you'll come back with us to tea. And if your spine is

bad, we'll put a lobster poultice on, which is an excellent thing, I assure you. My mother used it for twenty years, and then she tried crabs. And now, where are the coachman and the footmen, Dora?" Dora looked about, and soon discovered the three cuttlefish engaged in a gossip at a public-house close by, evidently describing with great animation the agonizing scene which they had just gone through with their young mistress. "I declare," said one, "I felt as if I were all arms and legs!" To which the merman, who kept the shop, replied, "You don't *say* so!" and poured him out another glass of fresh beer. But she looked in vain for Urchin, the coachman, and his scarlet coat, till at last, happening to cast her eyes on the ground, she beheld him—alas! *him* no longer—reduced to a mangled pink pulp, or, as the mathematical books say, that which has length and breadth, but no thickness. And you see thickness is indispensable to most of us poor feeble beings in this world.

"Oh!" cried she, "take me away, Ma! Give me the salts, Flora! I've sat upon

him and killed him by mistake! He was the nicest, smartest, best Urchin in all the seas!"

"Oh!" echoed poor Mrs. Willowy-Billowy. "Oh!" re-echoed Flora Wavy-Cavey; and they all supported each other's fainting forms to the carriage, waggling about a great deal on the way, till they happened to hit the right direction, when they fell all three in a row on the back seat, and became speechless for five minutes.

"Well," said Miss Willowy-Billowy, after she had dried three little tears that somehow managed to fall out of the left corner of her right eye, "there's one comfort; I don't think he *felt* it much; do you, Ma? He must have soon squashed."

"Well, it might have been worse, dear," replied Mrs. Willowy-Billowy; "and I've no doubt everything is for the best. You remember, don't you, my advising you not to put on your lilac and green silk skirt, which would have been quite spoiled with his pink waistcoat, the colour comes off so. I must write about a new coachman

for you this evening, and perhaps Urchin's clothes will come useful. There is no need to go to unnecessary expense."

The three black footmen sprang at the back of the carriage, the coachman cracked his whip, the sea-horses pranced, and off they went, faster and further till they were lost in the general whirl of coaches and vehicles which were going—as if for the life of them they had laid a wager on it—in a ceaseless clatter round and again around Deep-Sea Rotten Row.

CHAPTER VI.

DEEP-SEA TOWN.

HARRY had been so interested in watching the scene that has just been described, that he and the Boots remained rooted to the spot, and scarcely exchanged a word. When it was all over, they could not help laughing, in spite of the accident to poor Urchin, who had been taken into the public-house and was laid out on the table in the best parlour.

"Why," said Harry, "Miss Willowy-Billowy's new waggonette was the old gentlemen's bag that they send down with invitations to the inhabitants to come and stay with them in the ship."

"It shows quite plainly," replied the Boots, "that their language is not understood here. Miss Willowy-Billowy's parcels

and her new bonnet were all they got this time; and what we saw before seemed to me to be the 'rag, tag, and bobtail' of the town: two little urchins of errand-boys, who were swinging on the carriage by mistake and couldn't get clear, and a few brushes and sponges of Mrs. Washey's, that she had put out to soak opposite her shop-door on a mat near the gutter. Nevertheless," added the Boots, reflectively, "of course it will show they *do* wash down here, and that they *have* errand-boys. So far, good, though not complimentary as regards the invitations."

Harry now expressed a wish to take a walk round the town, and to see some of the sights, which he naturally thought must be worth looking at after they had come such a long way to see them,—like the famous picture which the rich old farmer went a thousand miles to see, and which, strange to say, when he beheld it, appeared nothing at all in the world but a black something, with a dingy brown something else in the middle, and a yellow nose in the midst of that, which

had only made its appearance after a vigorous application of soap and water from some ignorant person who didn't know any better. "Is this the famous picture?" asked the old farmer. "I see nothing but a nose."

"Look again, sir," said the guide, "and I'm sure you'll see the effect." But the old farmer poked about, and screwed his eye up, and put on his spectacles, and stood on tiptoe, and *still*, do what he would, he could see nothing but a nose.

"It is a nose," said he at last, angrily; "and I believe that's all it's meant for."

"Well," replied the guide, "it may be mostly a nose, too, now I come to think of it; but remember, sir, you've come a thousand miles to see it!"

Which is a great principle in travelling, and seeing of sights. Now Harry had only come *three* miles, though, of course, that is a long way when it means going straight down in the water, and I think *he* came better off and *did* see something, not only worth seeing, but quite unlike anything he had ever seen before. But before they began

their perambulations, a feeling of humanity prompted Harry and the Boots to call at the public-house and make inquiries concerning the untimely fate of poor Urchin, Miss Willowy-Billow's fat coachman, and to suggest that it might be as well to send for a doctor, to see if there were any remaining sparks of life left in him. To their unbounded astonishment, they beheld the old fellow nearly restored to his natural shape, and sitting up manfully on the table where he had been laid, though he panted a good deal and seemed to have a great weakness in his chest, as might naturally be expected. A doctor was already in attendance, who remarked that he was as well as could be expected under the circumstances, and if it hadn't been the worse for him, it might be the better, only it was better still that it hadn't been worse, as if so, it would then have been the worst thing that could have happened to him,—and showed himself altogether a very sagacious and scientific sort of man. He finished up with remarking, “Handsome is as handsome does,” and

putting on his hat and top-coat, prepared to leave the room; upon which speech, everybody, including two sharks, the merman who kept the public-house, and his wife and son, applauded loudly.

"What was the matter?" asked Harry, as he jostled past him and the Boots in the door.

"Collapse, sir; case of collapse," said the doctor, without turning round. "I've ordered him two dozen bread-and-milk pills, the size of my fist, which will soon bring him round and fatten him up again. Good morning." And, indeed, poor Urchin *did* seem as if he had taken a good dose of something, for he groaned a great deal and complained of his chest, and declared that his condition was anything but satisfactory.

"I'd sooner," said he, "have stayed as Miss Dora left me. There's always been a family tendency to collapse, and it agrees with us if it isn't too suddint and violent-like, which them nasty bread-and-milk pills don't. None o' them other urchins, as you knows, could get through with this; they're as stiff

as boards. I think I'll take a fly home to my cottage." Whereupon the poor old fellow rolled down from the table, and waddled out of the door, patting and rubbing his sides in a most melancholy style, till reaching a cabstand, he dived into a hackney mussel-shell, and disappeared altogether from the scene.

Harry and the Boots had now leisure to look about them, and observe the many new and curious features of Deep-Sea Town. They noticed, first of all, that the streets were arched over with beautiful pink coral branches, which sprang from lofty stems on either side, and which were ornamented naturally with innumerable rose-coloured spots. It had a very gay and pleasant appearance. The houses were the most picturesque in the world, being grottoes of different sizes, formed of deep blue-and-violet shaded rock, with here and there dashes of rose-colour in it also; the floors of most of the best houses were laid with the many-tinted mother-of-pearl, and the furniture was also entirely formed of twisted shapes of white and red coral. The streets were of the

finest white sand, with golden grains in it which sparkled very prettily, and were further rendered beautiful by the climbing sea-plants, which twirled and twisted their ribbon-like leaves and stalks and feathery sprays round the coral arches already mentioned.

Then, farther out of the town, whole groves of the brightest plants and sea-trees flourished, which waved their broad leaves and delicate little branches backwards and forwards in the water with a pleasant murmur, and constituted the home of various fish of all kinds of colours, which were in a great many cases the property of the towns-people, who each kept a small shoal.

From these groves it was that the delicious spicy odours were wafted about all over the town, and far above it, which also greatly added to the warmth and pleasantness of the water. The mer-people feel these influences, too, on their sensitive skins, as they are provided with a special sense which we up here in the upper world don't possess. All this makes the Deep-Sea country very charming

and delightful. The inhabitants are never at a loss for amusement, as they have so many resources both in themselves and the sea around them to make them happy. Harry and the Boots partly caught the wonderful grace and inspiration of the place, but of course they were not fitted to enjoy it in the same way as its own happy, careless children—the people of the sea.

After wandering about a good deal in the chief streets and the groves outside the town, Harry and the Boots strolled back, to have a last look at the chief promenade before they returned to the green surface of the upper world. One thing struck them as particularly nice, and that was, that all the grottoes being open in two or three directions, while they were still quite sheltered and cosy, made all their owners feel as if they belonged to one family. Everybody was intimate with everybody, even in a way with the people who sold in the streets and swept the houses, and did things of that sort; and they were recognized, too, in quite a pleasant sort of way; and then there was no calling or send-

ing your card or name in when you went to pay visits. You peeped in at Mrs. Somebody's door, and if she hadn't gone out, and was there, you immediately entered and invited yourself to tea, and she never looked to see if you had your best gown on first, but told the footman to boil the kettle directly. In fact, it was quite Arcadian. Miss Willowy-Billow and Miss Wavy-Cavey were the only two who tried to upset the simplicity of Deep-Sea society, and had grand notions of pretending to knock at an imaginary door, and inquiring whether any one was in, when they could see all the while right into the house, and who was in and who wasn't. Once or twice Mrs. Merbody, a very sociable person, who however stuck up for "good old ways," called out "Yes, I am, but I'm going out immediately," to snub them; and so let us hope that, after the sad upset out of Miss Willowy-Billow's "fashionable waggonette," they mended their manners and came back, like sensible mer-folk, to old ways and old customs.

Harry's and the Boots' experiences of

society were destined to meet with a most pleasant proof of the universal affability before they left the fine old town. As they turned up Coral Grove, they beheld two milk-white sea-horses approaching at a rapid pace, decked with gold harness, and drawing a most elegant yet simple chariot, formed of a pearly nautilus-shell ornamented with narrow lines of gold; and before they had time to wonder who the owner was, it drew up close beside them. Seated in it was a fair young mermaid with a profusion of golden hair, a beautiful complexion, and eyes of the deepest sapphire blue. In fact, she was lovely. She wore a coronet on her brow, and was evidently a person of some importance; but she turned towards them with the sweetest smile and outstretched hands, saying, "You are strangers here, for I know all who live around me. Welcome to Deep-Sea Town! Is there anything I can show you or explain to you in our coral world, which is, I think, quite unlike your own home in that upper one of which I have read? If so, my

chariot and my father's house are at your service. He delights in making acquaintance with all who have a love of knowledge and travel, and can in return furnish him with descriptions of things and places he has never seen."

Harry thanked the young Princess—for such he felt sure she was—most courteously, and the Boots made their best bow, but assured her that their time was too limited for a lengthened stay in Deep-Sea Town, which they hoped, however, they should one day soon revisit. The young mermaid then had some further conversation with them, in which she informed them that she was the only daughter of the Mer-king of that territory of Deep-Sea land, and that her name was Ondine, and she the Princess of the land. She seemed at once so winning in her ways and so simple in her plain white robe, quite unadorned save by a light blue belt around her waist and one gold clasp upon her left arm,—the royal ensign of a circling sea-serpent,—and had such frank and courteous manners, that Harry and the

Boots contrasted her involuntarily with the appearance and behaviour of Miss Willowy-Billogy and Miss Wavy-Cavey,—not certainly to the advantage of the latter damsels.

The Princess Ondine was the most refined and intelligent as well as the most beautiful of all the mermaids in Deep-Sea land, and, what was better still, she employed her wits and her means for the good of those of her father's subjects who were in need of her assistance.

Waving her little hand with a pleasant gesture, the pretty Princess bade them good-bye, and drove rapidly away, leaving Harry and the Boots much of the same mind, namely, that this was the fairest vision of Deep-Sea Town, and *quite* worth coming three miles down to behold.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. HERMIT-CRAB AND THE PRINCESS ONDINE.

OUR two friends—I call them two, though, perhaps, you might think them *three*, but the Boots were just like the Siamese twins, and even had the same ideas upon everything, and always spoke with one voice—now began to turn their steps towards High Rock Pinnacle, the loftiest spot near Deep-Sea Town, from whence they intended to start on their journey upwards. As they passed the end of Coral Grove, they heard a loud noise of music proceeding from one of the houses there—a very gay one, by the way, and painted outside all over red and blue spots on a yellow ground; and looking in at the window, they beheld Miss Willowy-Biloway and Miss Wavy-Cavey busily engaged in

playing one of the new Fiddle-de-dee waltzes upon a pink-coloured pearl piano, which had evidently cost ever so much. Harry kissed his hand to them, and they immediately rushed to the window and giggled tremendously at him, Miss Willowy-Billowy exclaiming, "Why, it's one of the two-legged creatures from the green world above, I declare! What impudence! I never saw one before except in a picture in a book, they come down so seldom; but mamma used to know lots that were upset out of a thing they called a ship, and came down here and stayed a great while. I wish she would ask him to tea. He looks nice." Upon this, the Boots exclaimed, "I can't let him come in now, young ladies, as his mamma might be anxious about him, and is expecting him back, but we shall hope to send you something very nice from our home in the world above—a new bonnet each from Smith and Jones." But Miss Willowy-Billowy and Miss Wavy-Cavey seemed so astonished at the Boots and their speechification, that they remained standing quite still, as if transfixed, till they had finished

speaking, and then they screamed, "Oh, how dreadful! What a *queer* creature! Did you ever!" and ran back to the piano in the interior as if the sea-serpent had been chasing them, not seeming in the least grateful for the new bonnets from Smith and Jones; and the last Harry and the Boots saw of them were four white arms whirling away like the most furious windmills, while the strains of the 'Fiddle-de-dee' penetrated every corner of the Grove, and even made such a disturbance in the water that it apparently reached towards the far-away habitation of the Sun-fish, and caused that respectable old fellow to look as if he had got the quakes very badly.

Harry and the Boots laughed, and both agreed that they should like to put these two lively mermaids in bottles and preserve them as "specimens"; and while they were thus discussing their experiences of the Deep-Sea country, and expressing opinions on its inhabitants, they quickly approached the neighbourhood of the peak whence they were to ascend. Before they had quite





‘WHO IS IT THAT IS MAKING ALL THIS NOISE?’—Page 67.

reached it, however, they came to a very big "curly-wurly"-looking thing standing by itself at the side of the road, which had a long peak pointing high up into the water, and a large door, over which was written on a board "Science-house"; and when they were quite opposite to it, a very queer, crabbed-looking creature peeped out of the door and said, in a very cross tone, "Who is it that is making all this noise? They are disturbing my calculations dreadfully. Just look at the Sun-fish!" He then took off his spectacles and rubbed his head with one of his long claws, and went in again, looking terribly agitated, and, in fact, as if he were bordering on distraction. Voices were heard inside, and presently a most venerable old gentleman, a merman, of course, came out and said, "I'm afraid Mr. Hermit-Crab has been rather rude; but the fact is, he is my Astronomer-royal, and he had nearly calculated how wide the Sun-fish would be if its width were four times less and five times greater than the breadth of the whole, when this shocking organ-grinding nuisance began and quite upset him."

Harry and the Boots didn't like to say that what the Astronomer-royal and the old gentleman mistook for organ-grinding were Miss Willowy-Billow's and Miss Wavy-Cavey's musical performances in Coral Grove; but on the latter adding "Won't you come in?" they thought it might help to smooth matters down if they accepted the invitation. The old gentleman then turned his back and went inside to lead the way; when they saw that he had a gold crown, pitched, for convenience sake, as it was hot weather, on the back of his head; and a purple robe, trimmed all over with the best star-fishes, tucked up in a bunch at his back. He was evidently the Mer-king and the Princess Ondine's papa.

No sooner had they got inside than they heard Mr. Hermit-Crab retreating up into a passage at the left, calling out as he went, "Well, come up, and be quick about it"; and leaving the spacious apartment,—which was filled with curious instruments entirely new to Harry, all except a cannon-ball, labelled "Meteor," and part of an old

anchor, ticketed up "Stone from a Comet," and other little articles,—they proceeded to enter the door through which His Majesty and Mr. Hermit-Crab had already passed. It led into a long passage, with very short steps, which curved round and round, and grew smaller and smaller, as they ascended. and, as the windows were little and placed at long intervals, both Harry and the Boots had enough to do to grope their way. It was most tiring, and they had to sit down to rest twice; and when at last they did get towards the tip of this high peak, the passage became so small that they had to go on all-fours. This was the principal reason why the Mer-king had his royal robes tucked up, though certainly it was a way he had when he was busy and felt scientific. At last a flood of light fell on them, and, looking upwards, they beheld the Mer-king and Mr. Hermit-Crab standing on a platform just above, and very busy looking through a long twisted tube, which was evidently a species of telescope. They made room for Harry and the Boots, and

showed them how to look through it, which they did, and then inquired, as they were evidently travelled folk, and had passed by the Sun-fish on their way to Deep-Sea land, what their opinion was on the structure of the creature. The Boots replied that it was a bright phosphoric sort of fish, fed by three good-natured whales on the choicest seaweeds, and always remained stationary in its home. At this Mr. Hermit-Crab shook his head and frowned a great deal, and said that didn't agree with his theory at all. *His* idea was that it was a spontaneous kind of comet in the shape of a fish, naturally,—as it grew in the water,—which was in a perpetual state of explosion. Probably it would one day blow up altogether, which would cause darkness in all the Deep-Sea country, and kill all the people who lived there in consequence, as nobody could be expected to live in pitch darkness. This idea seemed rather to please him than otherwise. He then directed Harry and the Boots to look again through the telescope, and see if it wasn't just exactly as he said. So they did.

Certainly, there was nothing to contradict the theory,—if anybody chose to call the Sun-fish a “comet,” it might as well be called that as anything else; but to Harry and the Boots, who had seen the beautiful creature comparatively quite close, it appeared quite different. It looked alive and enjoying itself, and they could see its pretty eyes sparkling as one of the whales, which was almost obscured by its brilliant light, brought it a fresh basket of food.

“There!” Harry exclaimed. “I saw the whale!”

“Fooh!” cried Mr. Hermit-Crab, in a fume—an expression he always used when expressing incredulity,—“I saw it myself; it was only a passing cloud of seaweed.”

He then commenced a very learned discussion, arguing that no whale could live at such a height; and if it could, it would be too timid to approach the Sun-fish; and if it did *that*, it wouldn't bring it anything to eat; and that if it *did* bring it something to eat,

that proved conclusively it couldn't be a whale at all. He then made a paste of some powders, labelled "Logic" and "Inductive Science," mixing up a little cake, which he put into a small oven and immediately took out again, and invited Harry and the Boots to refresh themselves with it, as it was an excellent thing when you were busy chitter-chattering, as they had been just now. Harry tried it, and found it not of a bad taste, as he expected, but only half-baked. As he was trying hard to choke down a particularly large morsel which Mr. Hermit-Crab specially recommended, he was relieved by hearing a light step upon the stair, and a silvery voice, which he immediately recognized, calling out "Papa, dear, aren't you coming home to dinner?" It was the Princess Ondine; and giving a little graceful dive at the narrow entrance, she glided in upon the platform. The Mer-king rushed towards her, and giving her a fatherly kiss, inquired "if there was anything *very* nice, nice enough to entice him away from his favourite Science-house and the company of his Astronomer-royal,

adding that she *had* been bold to venture as far as this."

"It wasn't to disturb you," replied the Princess, blushing; "it was only to be in your company." Meanwhile Mr. Hermit-Crab, after giving a sulky bow, had hustled off the remainder of the cakes from the table, and concealed them in a cupboard, against which he sat with his back, as if afraid that the Princess should try to open it, and have a share in the feast. Neither would he say a word, as he considered his remarks and his language altogether beyond the comprehension of a young merlady, even though a princess. The Princess, who, however, was very amiable, entered into conversation with her royal papa, and Harry and the Boots, whom she recognized at once as the strangers she had met in Coral Grove, and to whom, in his name, she had already given a welcome. They were more than ever charmed with the mingled simplicity and grace of her manners, as well as the intelligent way in which she spoke of everything which came under her notice. Harry asked

her, in a whisper, if she did not resent the surly manners of Mr. Hermit-Crab, who, on being solicited, positively refused to show her any of the sights of his Science-house, or to allow her to peep through the telescopic tube at the Sun-fish (rather, indeed, to the annoyance of the Mer-king, whose policy it was, however, never to interfere with him); but she replied, sweetly, and sadly, too, as Harry thought, "What matters it, when I shall some day, and, perhaps, so soon, pay a visit to your beautiful green world, and know so much more than we can here. I know Mr. Hermit-Crab is greedy, and does not like me even to see the cakes he makes, although I own he often twits me with never having tasted them,—but let him have his way." Then Harry wondered greatly not at this greed, indeed, for greed is common, but at the fancied value and the false ideas the Astronomer-royal had connected with the poor and scanty productions of his Science-house. And then, for the first time, Harry knew that it was a legend of the Deep-Sea country that all its people should some

day leave that far-down land, and with it their strange and witching forms, and ascend to the green world above—his home—there to walk about, and dwell always as happy human beings.

CHAPTER VIII.

UP IN THE GREEN WORLD : THE O-FY SCHOOLS.

THE hour had come. Harry and the Boots were fain to leave Deep-Sea Town, and return again through the world of waters to the regions of air ; and as they stood upon the little platform, it occurred to them that from no place could they have a better starting-point than from there. So it had e'en come as it ever comes, go where we will—see what we may—to “farewell !” and from the Mer-king and his kindly face, even Mr. Hermit-Crab, and last, not least, you may be sure, the pretty Princess, they won smiles and regretful looks, not unaccompanied by hearty wishes that they would come again, then to pay a longer visit, and see yet more of the manners and customs of the beautiful coral town.

“Stand lightly on the highest point of the long telescope,” said the Boots; and Harry and the Boots flew up to it together, and stood poised ready for the spring which they were to make to send them upwards on their long ascent. ’Twas given, and in a moment up they went, with a powerful impulse that drove the waters down beneath their feet, and sent them so far on their way that already Deep-Sea Town and its golden streets, and coral arches and pleasant grottoes, were spread out as in a map before their gaze. Harry took one last look at the group on the platform of the Science-house, and beheld faintly the sour old astronomer, with half of his body concealed inside the cupboard, where he was no doubt engaged in consuming Harry’s rejected lunch; while the Mer-king sat in an easy chair with his crown on his lap, and wiped his ample forehead with his pocket-handkerchief. And the Princess Ondine? You may be sure Harry looked at *her*. *She* stood at the very verge of the little platform, leaning over a railing which partly supported the telescopic tube; her white robe

waved gently about in the waters, her face was upturned as though she were looking after her lost friends; and Harry fancied, in the clear light which shone upon her, that there glittered two little diamond tears in her blue eyes. In another moment she and the Mer-king, and the gruff astronomer, and the Science-house became white and black specks and a dim outline, and then faded quite away.

Up they went, higher and higher; fizz! whizz! rushed the water past them, till they came near the spot where the Sun-fish dwelt, and soon it disclosed itself to them in all its glory. "The Astronomer-royal down there says you're a comet in a constant state of explosion!" roared Harry, with as loud a voice as he could, to make himself heard. The Sun-fish made no reply at all, but looked as if he quite understood it, for he rolled his sparkling eyes round in the direction of Harry, and gave a tremendous wink and smiled. Up they went, still on and higher, leaving *him*, too, behind them in their course, till at last the water seemed to grow thinner

and lighter, and to send them up like corks with greater and greater force; and the Boots exclaimed that they were very near the surface of their own world again. And before they had time to wonder about it much more, up they shot right into the region of air and cloudland again, leaving the blue sea with such a splash that they must have looked like a sort of volcanic fountain.

“Oh,” cried Harry, “how *queer* it feels, and how different it is here!” And then they travelled with great speed straight in the direction of the land. They passed over the little ship still sailing peacefully on her way, and Harry saw just drawn up with great toil and trouble Miss Willowy-Billow’s “fashionable waggonette.” They were up-setting it and eagerly scanning its contents. “What a beautiful creature,” he heard one of the hospitable gentlemen exclaim; “pray take care of it.” The creature in question was poor Miss Willowy-Billow’s new bonnet, with the band-box all crushed in, or surely they *must* have known it was a bonnet, and

a very smart one too. They crowded around it, they washed it, they dried it, they made a house for it, they labelled it with a long Latin name, and then they sat in a circle and looked at it, but they *never* guessed that this was the property of one of the belles of Deep-Sea Town, and that she had gone to shop and pay calls in their very own big leather bag! Half-an-hour more quick speeding over the foam-tossed waves of the blue ocean—oh, how fresh the breeze seemed!—and they caught sight of land; and flying directly towards it, in a few minutes more Harry and the Boots stood once again upon the broad surface of mother earth.

Oh, how green everything looked!—white sky and green earth—fields and trees, hedge-rows and wayside plants, all such a bright, intense, all-pervading green. Then the white clouds, pile upon pile in the faint blue sky, with the sun—*our* far-off sun—clothing them with silver glory. How different, how fresh, how *airy* everything was! It was, compared with the many-tinted coral town



‘HARRY AND THE BOOTS SAT DOWN UNDER SOME OLD
APPLE-TREES.’—Page 81.

and the heavy-scented sea, just like the difference between a snug warm room, lit up with glancing firelight and bright yellow lights, full of people gaily dressed for a dance or a charade, and a quiet, pleasant drawing-room in early June, looking out on a breezy blue sky,—trees sparkling all over with golden green, after the summer shower, and bending close up to the white-curtained windows,—full of quiet murmuring sound, bird-songs and bee-songs, and summery looks and whispers. Harry was very sorry to leave Deep-Sea land and the dear little Princess Ondine, but he was glad, too, to see all the familiar home-like scenes again. Contented with the mere sight of them, he and the Boots sat down under some old apple-trees and had a good rest. I think they went comfortably to sleep for about half-an-hour.

After they had remained there some little while, the Boots proposed that, as their time was limited, they should take advantage of the present opportunity to pay a visit to the celebrated O-fy schools for little boys, conducted on the Chinese plan, and which

were situated on that part of the coast. Harry asked what the Chinese plan was. The Boots replied that it meant that they had plenty of lessons, but never learned any. It was found to answer exceedingly well, and preserved good old ways beautifully; and he was sure Harry would be so delighted with all their various customs, that he would infinitely prefer it to the stern discipline of Mr. Coachwell. "However," added the Boots, "when they got there he would see for himself." So they got up and walked in the direction of the cliff, along which a very pretty path led to some fields in which they soon saw a little building with a very high, large wall around it. The Boots gave one hop, and Harry and they perched themselves on the top of this wall, whence they could have a capital view of all that was going on in the enclosure. It was quite full of little boys, all amusing themselves in every sort of way; nearly all were in the playground, which was very large indeed, and surrounded by the wall, and the rest were in the little house, reading very hard out of big books, and

doing lots of sums on their slates. Harry naturally thought it was play-time, and inquired how it was the boys in the little house were kept in when the others were at play; but the Boots told him that everybody might always play if they liked, and that the busy little boys preferred being in the house and looking at books, as they had a singular idea that this was what they were there for. The other boys thought it was the best fun to learn all the fashionable games, and know all the O-fy ways generally, as it was a nice kind of thing to do. Some grave-looking old gentlemen in long black gowns walked up and down in the midst of all this turmoil; but although they were put out occasionally by the noise, they were so engaged with reading their books and talking together that they rarely took any notice of what went on; and perhaps it was the best way, as otherwise the very naughty boys might have been obliged to be thrashed; and when this *did* occur, it was a dreadful trouble to everybody. But I must tell you what Harry saw. He noticed there was a brook running through the middle of the

playground, and, of course, a great many of the little boys were engaged in dabbling in that. They had several games, but the great one was sailing little boats, and that they were never tired of.

Once in a certain time, so the Boots said, the two best boats were drawn along by the two quickest running boys in the schools, to see which went fastest, when all the boys, new and old, crowded in the playground to see them; and there was such a hallooing and racing, and shouting and excitement, that there might never have been such things as boats invented before. The appearance of the first railway train didn't make half the fuss and noise in the world. Their ordinary ways of amusing themselves, however, were mostly of this kind. Six or eight boys would bring out a table and have their tea—their milk and bread-and-butter together; and when they had finished, they began to sing a number of queer songs, and throw the jugs and mugs about, and sometimes they finished up with smashing the table. That *was* fun!

Harry noticed a little party close to him

and the Boots; they had finished tea, and some had their legs on the table, and some their heads (*they* were asleep), and one got up and sang a song, with his head wagging about a great deal, and looking rather foolish. This was the song:—

“What a nice little, bright little school,
It would make a wise man of a fool;
But fine fellows like we
Like to play and take tea—
So we make *that* the rule of our school.”

Which they did, certainly. At this there was a great clapping of hands and huzzaing. There were a great many of these teas going on all over the playground, and the warm milk-and-water had made some of the poor little fellows *so* sleepy. Those who weren't at tea were riding about on ponies, driving little carriages, &c., with their caps cocked on one side. They considered themselves the smartest boys there, and wore velvet coats and kid gloves, and smoked the best brown-paper cigars. But that was in the evening, as it was considered bad manners, so the Boots said, to smoke in the day.

This seemed very funny, after smashing up all their best tea-sets; but, as the Boots remarked, the boys were very unaccountable, and as long as you didn't throw your broken dishes and things on the chief walk, where everybody went, nobody minded. But it was quite the thing to behave yourself "afore folk." Peep-shows were also very fashionable amusements in the playground, and a great many of the little boys seemed to have nothing else in their heads. They sat and looked at them for hours in the evening, and spent nearly all their pennies and weekly pocket-money on the men who kept them. And, indeed, the young gentlemen required lots of pocket-money, more sometimes than their papas approved of. One of them, on being asked by his papa, when he had come home for the holidays, what he had been doing that year, replied that he had "smashed twelve jugs, seen a fresh peep-show every evening, and learnt one page of geography." Upon which his papa sent him off immediately with a tutor, who no doubt made him attend better to his lessons. But the

time fails me to tell of all the games that were played, and the pranks that were practised, and the pocket-money that was spent by all those little boys that Harry saw; how they used to get outside the playground to race their little ponies; how they used to tie paper tails to the old gentlemen in the gowns; to make bonfires close by the little house, and tease the good scholars inside, besides smashing the windows occasionally, and telling fibs and foolish tales, and getting into scimmages. All these things they did, and a good many more, till at last the *best* of the playing boys would make a desperate bustle just before they left, and rush to the little house and try to get good marks for their lessons; and no doubt this effort sobered them a little, though it was only to be expected that what came in so quickly at one ear would soon go out at the other.

“Then these,” remarked Harry, after they had sat watching the O-fy playground for about an hour, “are *really* little boys’ schools?”

“Really and truly,” answered the Boots.

“Dear me,” said Harry, jumping down from his perch on the wall; “how wise you are! I should never have thought it.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE FAIRY FLIRTAWAY.

HAVING occupied their time with the schools during the period that they were resting,—for of course they were naturally tired after coming up such a long distance from Deep-Sea Town,—it now remained for Harry and the Boots to decide what they would like to see next. The Boots mentioned several things it would be desirable to visit, but most of them were a long way from that part of the coast. At last the Boots recollected that there was a very curious little territory some way inland among the mountains where lived a little lady,—a fairy, of course,—who spent all her time catching little boys and putting them in a horrid dark place like a cupboard, but which was built

so as to appear like a nice bower on the outside. "Would Harry like to see *her*?"

Harry thought he should, especially as he should like to scold the cruel little lady and liberate the poor little boys. The Boots said, however, and rather to his surprise, "You cannot do that, and, indeed, most likely she will try to shut *us* up. It will be great fun, for I'm not a bit afraid of her. Let her try!"

"How will she do it?" asked Harry, in some alarm.

"She'll try to bewitch us; but if we take *no* notice, she cannot do us any harm. If we *do*, we may find ourselves, like the little boys she catches and bewitches, inside the dark cupboard!"

This idea made the prospect of a visit to the little lady sufficiently exciting, and Harry, with a boyish longing for new adventures, proposed they should start at once.

Accordingly, they began to walk—this, the Boots said, was the best plan in this country, as you could see the scenery better—in the direction of some blue mountains

which lifted their lofty peaks before them on the horizon, talking all the way.

“Is she like the Princess Ondine?” inquired Harry, who could scarcely think of any young lady, particularly a fairy, except as being like her, and thought this cruel fay must at least be very pretty to look at, or the little boys would not be so ready to come to her.

“Not at *all*,” replied the Boots emphatically, and laughed; “but I can’t describe her. She is *more* like the lively Miss Willowy-Billow or Miss Wavy-Cavey, but more clever than they are.”

“Is she clever, then?” inquired Harry.

“Very,”—said the Boots,—“about catching little boys.”

That seemed all she could do, or did do; but, as the Boots added, “She does that to perfection, as you’ll see.” Whereupon Harry thought, “Oh, foolish little boys!”

They now approached a beautiful valley, which lay between them and the highest mountain, and Harry noticed so many pretty scenes,—trees, church-spires, sheep

couched in the long grass of the fields, and gentle spotted cows drinking at the pools and browsing on the buttercups and clover, —that he was almost tempted to stay there; and perhaps it would have been better for him if he had. But the Boots explained that, if they wanted to see all the sights, they must go right on and waste no time about other things; so they skipped up the side of the mountain after they had left this pretty vale, and soon came to the top, when they gave a great jump down the whole of the other side. This valley was equally beautiful, too; it seemed just made for people to be happy in, and had a variety of things in it both fitted to employ one's mind and please one's eye.

The Boots took a little path that looked as if it were trying to hide itself among the bushes; but on Harry's asking how it was he knew the way so well, they pointed to a little flag, very small, it is true, but on which was written in distinct characters, "*My flag. Come and welcome.*"

The flag was very gay-looking, and after

it had once caught your eye, you couldn't *help* knowing which way to go. Even Harry seemed to know the direction now, and they followed the path till it led right up to a beautiful garden, and opposite a gateway, over which was a sort of triumphal arch, and another larger flag flying: nothing could be more inviting than the appearance of this little spot. Harry was going eagerly to advance, but the Boots checked him, saying, in a low tone, "Hush! there's a little boy looking in. Let us hide behind these bushes and see what becomes of him." So they carefully concealed themselves and watched, wondering—at least, Harry wondered—what would happen next. For a few minutes *nothing* happened; no fairy appeared, there was no noise or sign of her, and Harry supposed she was not aware that the little boy was waiting to be admitted. This, however, was not the case. The little lady, whose name I may now tell you was the Fairy Flirtaway, had seen him from the first, but had not chosen to take any notice immediately, lest the little boy should be

frightened away; for, though he was fascinated by the garden and the beautiful flowers that grew in it, he had heard tales of small boys being put in the summer-house, and otherwise ill-used, and it would never have done for the fairy to appear too eager. And she did not. She looked all round her, hummed a tune, and then slowly sauntered down her garden path towards the gate, and presently cautiously peeped over it.

“What, *you* here, little boy?” cried she; “I had no idea of it”—(this was very wicked of the Fairy Flirtaway; only you see this was the way she caught her little boys);—“but I’m so glad you’ve come. And I suppose you want to see my pretty garden, and have some of my nice flowers and sweetmeats?” With this she flung open the gate wide, and Harry, for the first time, had a full view of her. She was, indeed, a *lovely* fairy. Upon her head she wore two blue butterflies, with a pink one in the middle; her hair was frizzed so that it looked like a cascade of golden water, while her complexion, which was of the most dazzling hues of pink and white, showed off

to the greatest advantage her pretty features, which consisted of a little nose which turned up just a little in the daintiest manner, a rosebud mouth, and two large innocent blue eyes over-arched with dark pencilled eyebrows. Then she had the sweetest little figure, two white round dimpled shoulders, and little plump arms and hands, and such little elegant tripping sort of legs and feet, quite indescribable! The minute you saw her you felt inclined to go and cuddle her up like a dolly. To add to her charms, she wore a rose-coloured flounced skirt with a gold sash, and from her ears and her necklace, and her shoulder-knots and her waistband and sash, there hung lots of tiny silver bells, which played a kind of music of the most bewitching kind wherever she went. Finally, her shoes were made of blue velvet, ornamented with two large silver butterflies, quite as pretty as those she wore in her hair.

She *was* a fairy, indeed; you could not take your eyes away from her. As for the little boy at the gate, he was so overcome with wonder and admiration, that he stood

gazing at her with his mouth open, and seemed as if he had quite lost his wits. The Fairy Flirtaway seemed, however, quite accustomed to the sensation she created in the minds of little boys, for she smiled and said, "Shy? Oh, no! Not with *me*. What's your name?—Tommy? Come in then, Tommy, for I must call you so, it's such a pretty name, and you must tell me all about yourself, and see my nice garden."

With this she patted his cheek, and gave him her little hand to help him along and take him the right way; and now Tommy seemed to have gathered so much courage, that he stepped boldly forward with the lovely Fairy, much to her satisfaction.

"None of the little boys," said the Fairy, "who have been here to-day wear such nice coats as you do; and, in consequence, I shall give you one of my best flowers that I am so fond of, which I make a rule never to pluck for *any one*—no, not if they wanted it ever so, and even *cried* for it!"

So she ran lightly to a flower-border close by, all her little bells tinkling and jingling,

and each of her five butterflies on her head, and shoes waggling and fluttering like life—it was quite enchanting; and picking the largest and gayest peony she could find,—which, she said, showed by its size how highly she thought of dear little Tommy,—she brought it to him, and fastened it for him in the most careful way in the left top button-hole of his coat. Tommy felt so proud that he scarcely knew what he was doing; and when the Fairy said she loved him better than all the other little boys put together, and she was sure he loved her, and that they should be the best of friends, Tommy declared his intention of staying with the nice, kind, beautiful Fairy in the garden all his life, and of leaving his papa and mamma and his own home altogether! Upon this the good Fairy squeezed his hand quite affectionately, and told him he must take tea with her in the nice summer-house at the end of the walk, where jam and toast were always ready, for the Fairy was hospitable to all comers—even her fairy friends who came sometimes for a jaunt in the

garden, and for whom there was a special table set,—adding, that for *Tommy* she had had the toast extra well buttered.

“First, though,” said she, “you must have some of my sweetmeats, as they will do you ever so much good.” Accordingly, she ran to a little box near the path with a handle to it, “for the convenience of carrying it about,” the Fairy said, as she rarely went anywhere without it, it was so useful. It was a fine box, curiously formed of bits of wood shaped like arrows, and carefully glued together: on the cover was inscribed—

“‘Nods and Becks and Wreathed Smiles,’
Speeches soft and Tender Wiles.”

And these were the names of the different sweetmeats. Tommy was quite eager to catch a sight of the contents; and when the Fairy lifted the cover and took out two of the largest size, didn't he open his mouth wide and gobble them up! The Fairy was delighted, and called him a “dear, sweet, innocent little chick”; and Tommy, who had now become quite silly, for the sweatmeats being powerful had sent intoxicating fumes right up into

his curly head, immediately called her the "loveliest Fairy that ever was," tottered on his feet, hugged closer and closer to his delightful Fairy in the most confiding manner, and suffered himself to be led up unresistingly to the summer-house, the tales about which he had entirely forgotten. It seemed now, too, more inviting than ever. Over the doorway was written—

"Come, dear friends, and take your seats,
Here you 'll find the choicest meats ;
Each of us is like a dove,
Sure it is the bower of Love."

And the outside presented such an attractive appearance, being entirely overgrown with roses, peonies, sunflowers, and the brightest blossoms of various kinds, that it looked most enchanting.

Just as Tommy and the Fairy arrived opposite to it, she took a small iron key out of her pocket, and waited for a moment pointing out the beauties of the arbour, and describing how jolly the tea was inside, till Tommy grew quite impatient, and made a rush to the door in the greatest hurry, which

the Fairy perceiving, she immediately unlocked it, and, giving him a push, which might have sent him along for a mile without stopping in that direction, instantaneously closed it again with a bang, locked it quite close, and put the key away in her pocket! She then marched back again just the same way she had gone up, as if there were no such being as poor little Tommy in existence.

Upon this, Harry felt so sorry for poor Tommy, and so indignant with the naughty Fairy Flirtaway, that he wanted to go and let the little boy out, as he felt sure that even if there were nothing very dreadful in the summer-house he would feel very lonely, and perhaps cry at being left to himself. The Boots, however, told him that it was locked with a magic key, and that nobody could help him out, not even the Fairy, after little boys had once gone in; she could only put them there: the only way out was through a dismal lane between two high walls, without a bit of view, and full of hard stones, which led far away from the pretty Fairy and her flowery garden. It was very

difficult to get into, too, and most of the little boys preferred remaining in the summer-house to encountering the perils of the lane, especially as they were always hoping the Fairy would come to them some day, and they could often hear her soft voice.

So Harry and the Boots agreed to wait and watch what the Fairy did next, before they attempted to go to the gate themselves. They had not to wait long. They heard the Fairy singing joyously in the garden, while she planted some fresh flowers, and placed a larger peony than ever in a pot close by the walk; and as she was thus engaged, they heard a sound at the gate, and soon discerned there a very funny little boy, with a large head, and a wise look in his eye, who was dressed up very smartly in a blue velvet coat and knickerbockers. He seemed, however, a very pert sort of boy.

He stayed at the gate a good long while, peeping, and trying to see what was going forward before he knocked, and was not by any means in a hurry; but presently the

Fairy jingled her little bells so prettily, that this little saucy boy was rather amused with it, and exclaiming to herself, "*It must* be fun in that garden!" gave a loud knock at the very middle of the gate. The Fairy Flirtaway, you may be sure, did not give him time to run away again. She sang one of her best songs just inside the gate, and then suddenly opening it, cried out,—“How funny! I was just wishing that somebody would come and talk with me in the garden, it's so dull to be all alone.” (You see, the Fairy made no allusion to poor Tommy, who was shut up in the summer-house.) “Do take pity on me, and come in and have a little chat!”

“Oh, by all means,” said the pert boy, who was besides so conceited, that he considered his presence immensely superior to any of the quiet amusements of the garden, which were more than sufficient to interest a fairy of ordinary intelligence. But I ought to say here that there was one great peculiarity of the Fairy's garden, and that was, that nothing could be seen distinctly in it,

except the peony-bushes, the walk, the box of sweetmeats and the summer-house, and the little boys who used to visit her. The Fairy herself could see nothing but these, and, indeed, to tell the truth, she usually saw less than the people, whoever they might be, who came to visit her, always complaining of the dullness of the garden, and the bad view from it, and the “nothing-to-do” generally, whereas there was a beautiful mountain on the right, down whose azure sides the little streams were wont to trickle in the sunlight, looking like moving silver threads, and on whose crest the very clouds used to come and rest,—clouds so beautiful, that they seemed carved of silver, and fringed with light itself,—besides cottages in the village, with many poor people in them, with very little money, and who would have been only too glad to welcome a powerful fairy within their walls, to give them a little help. Then, too, she had many diversions in parts of her own garden,—bees and fountains and birds, and various other things, which would have amused anybody ;

and when you consider that a fairy is able to employ her time in ways which ordinary people can't,—to travel far off, and see new and interesting sights,—without waiting a moment to consider about it,—I think you will allow that the Fairy Flirtaway preferred catching little boys to anything else, and didn't choose to seek for occupation in other directions. The mist in her garden which obscured the prettiest objects arose from her neglect in tending it. But, to tell the truth, the Fairy really didn't *know* what to do with her own powers, and was sadly in want of wise counsel.

We must now, however, record what Harry and the Boots saw as they stood watching the pert little boy behind the bushes. They soon found out, from the conversation between him and the Fairy, that his name was Master Peter Pickle, and they were much amused at his little airs as he walked up the garden path. His manners were a great contrast to poor Tommy's; and when the Fairy presented him with the large peony, which, of course, she said was the first

flower she had ever given to a creature, so far from being proud of it, he began to whistle 'Flowers of the Garden' (which, as I dare say you know, is a very sentimental song), to the tune of 'Ten Little Niggers,' plucking it to pieces all the time, and sticking the petals in a row on his cane, which seemed to occupy his attention more even than the Fairy herself. The poor Fairy Flirtaway had enough to do to keep this little man amused, for he seemed in no hurry to eat the sweetmeats or walk to the summer-house, or to take tea with her, as she solemnly assured him he should do, if he liked, immediately. He skipped here and there, and talked a good deal about himself and his best suit of violet clothes, and his white pony, which, when the Fairy heard of, she made up her mind he *should* be got into the summer-house somehow or other, as, to tell the truth, she had really serious ideas about taking tea with this little boy herself. Peter Pickle, however, winked with his left eye, and said he had an idea that there was at least *one* little boy, if not more, in the

arbour already, adding, that was a thing he didn't approve of, "though," said he to himself, so that the Fairy shouldn't hear, "not that I care about that, for if I wanted to go there I should soon set about it, and keep the door open too."

Of course the Fairy Flirtaway liked this boy ever so much more than the others, and tried all she could do to make him come up a little quicker towards poor Tommy's quarters. She coaxed him, she scolded him, she invariably kept her eye on him, and she made twenty times more of him than she had ever made of anybody else in her life. The Fairy Flirtaway always did this. The boys she was cruel to, and whose little gifts she always threw about and trod upon, were the simple little fellows who used to believe what she told them and were fond of her. Sometimes one, clever at carving, would spend hours in the summer-house, cutting her a model of a little boat,—sometimes another would give her all his pocket-money, to buy presents for herself; and they would hand these things out to her from the windows

of their prison, which were too small and high to let in much light. And she would take the little gifts and throw them away out of sight among the bushes, and never think of them again. To return, however, to the particular scene which Harry and the Boots witnessed; the Fairy and Peter Pickle had approached nearer the summer-house at last than that young gentleman had ever been before, and in an unguarded moment he stood so perilously close that the Fairy whipped out her magic key, and gave a dart at him and a right good tug almost before he knew properly where he was. In a second, however, he showed pluck, and was too quick for her. He escaped with the speed of lightning round the corner of the arbour, and from thence sprang with great agility to the top of the Fairy's garden-wall, where the last Harry saw of him before he jumped down was his pert little head cocked on one side, and his hands extended in the most horrid vulgar street-boy fashion from the tip of his nose outwards into the air just like a spread-out fan—a sign

both pert and impudent. And then, and not till then, the Fairy Flirtaway assumed a haughty mien, drew up her little head, elevated her beautiful eyebrows, and fairly turned her back upon Peter Pickle!

CHAPTER X.

HARRY'S MISFORTUNE.

HARRY and the Boots were so much amused by this little incident, that they remained for ever so long laughing behind the bushes, after which Harry felt so positive that the Fairy Flirtaway was not in the least dangerous to sagacious boys, and that with common caution it was quite easy to escape from her, that he proposed they should pay her a visit in person without waiting any longer. They, therefore, boldly stepped forward into the pathway, and in another moment found themselves standing outside the inviting looking gate. Harry gave a loud knock, and almost immediately they heard a most enchanting sound of little silver bells, and rushing towards her bower-like

entrance, the Fairy quickly appeared, almost breathless with surprise and agitation. She opened the gate wide. How pretty she looked, to be sure! How her little white breast heaved, and her curly locks waved about in the wind, and her little bells went jingle! tingle! with a sweet sound that nobody *could* describe, but which sent quite a sensation towards Harry's very heart. Then she welcomed them so warmly, too, and in quite a different way to the others. "I never felt so glad," cried she, with two little tears in her eyes, and a rosy blush in her soft cheeks, "to see anybody in my life: and you and your friends the Boots above all things. If you *knew* how I am plagued by the most tiresome and foolish boys! I never have a minute's peace in my garden,—they are always trying to break into it and play in my summer-house. It really is *too* provoking!"

Harry felt quite sorry for her now that he understood things in that light. Poor little Fairy! She went on in the most appealing manner:—"I have just had such trouble with a horrid boy who would *insist* on entering into

my arbour: we had quite a struggle; but at last," cried the Fairy, clasping her little hands, "I *did* manage to turn him out—even poor little, *me!*" (So that was it! Harry began to think the Fairy Flirtaway was, after all, the most ill-used being in the world.) "But," she added to Harry, "if only some nice sensible boy like you would come and live near my garden, though *in* it would be better, I should not mind. I do so want somebody to come and protect all the walks and flowers I take such pains with"—(to this Harry could testify himself); "and you could stay in the summer-house and have it for your own. I believe one or two tiresome boys have got in and injured it, but I could soon turn them out with your help and tidy it up, for I quite *long* to have some nice clever steady boy to talk to."

At this indirect praise of himself Harry felt almost, but not *quite*, as proud as poor Tommy was of his peony, and told the Fairy he had long been interested in her proceedings, but that till now they had never appeared to him in such a sad and pitiable

light. He also added, that he had left home on purpose to make her acquaintance, which wasn't *exactly* the case, only Master Harry's imagination, like that of the other boys, was a little bit excited by the peculiar spell the Fairy always exercised by her presence. At this the Boots coughed slightly, but nobody took any notice.

"Ah!" said the Fairy, "I *thought* there were some strangers near me, for once I heard a slight noise among the bushes outside the gate." And so she had; and being a wise and cunning Fairy, and reflecting that if Harry and the Boots had been there they must have witnessed a good deal of what was going on in the garden, she determined to receive the next boys who came to see her, whoever they were, in quite a different way from what she had done before. As they passed the peony bush, she pointed it out in a careless way, saying, "That is my favourite bush, which I planted expressly a week ago for the sake of its nice crimson flowers. I even put it into a pot with my own hands," said she, with quite a despairing look; "and would you believe it

when I tell you, the boys pull off the blossoms so that I have scarcely one left for myself! *Isn't* it tiresome? See, I believe there's only one poor little bud left!"

And saying this, she flew to her peony-bush like a little bird, and, stooping over it, carefully dusted its poor leaves, and then kissed it, to show how tender-hearted she was,—how fond even of a simple growing plant; and selecting the finest bud from the one or two which still remained, ran with it to Harry, and looked up at him so sadly with her innocent face and her wistful blue eyes, and smiled so sweetly with her pretty pouting mouth and dimpled cheeks, that Harry was quite fascinated, and, thinking he had never seen such a lovely fairy before, at once seized the flower with the greatest delight. The Boots gave a violent kick as he accepted the bud, and the Fairy noticed it, saying, "Do your friends the Boots always kick like that?" in such a sorry sort of frightened tone, that Harry felt quite angry with his Boots, and bade them in a whisper on no account to do that again. The Boots wisely determined, therefore, to

act the only part left to true friends under such circumstances, namely, not to interfere till he got into a hobble, and then to do their best to help him out again.

The "hobble," as you will hear, was not so long in taking place. After he had possession of the flower the Fairy had so kindly presented to him, he became aware, for the first time, of a strange mistiness around him. It seemed like a sort of soft dreamy fog, if one can use such a word to express something a hundred times more delicate in hue and texture; and everything in consequence became indistinct except the Fairy Flirt-away, the rising walk bordered with flowers, and the arbour, which looked somehow more inviting than ever. As for the Fairy, she seemed to become positively radiant. Every moment she grew prettier and prettier, her dress and the silver bells appeared more and more wonderful, while her very steps seemed to have the grace of a fawn and the lightness of a bird. Then she talked in such an engaging, interesting way! Never had he heard such pleasing conversation before. The

Boots might be very wise certainly, but they were ugly old things compared with the Fairy Flirtaway; and Harry now felt rather indignant with them for not having brought him here at once, instead of wasting time down in Deep-Sea Land with the—the—dear me! he had almost forgotten! the mer-people, and the—oh! he remembered her now quite suddenly—the Princess Ondine. Ah! yes, she had seemed to like him, too, but not half so much as this pretty Fairy; and then the Fairy had known so many little boys, and liked *him* best, and preferred *he* should stay in her garden, because he was *sensible*. On the whole, he thought he would say nothing about his adventures in Deep-Sea Land and the Princess Ondine, even though the Fairy pressed him to tell her all about himself, and especially to tell her if he had ever seen any other nice Fairy or Princess in his travels. “I’m sure you have seen *somebody* very nice,” said she, nodding her little head till the pink butterflies looked as if they were going to fly off that minute; “and I should be so interested about her.”

Harry now began to make himself quite as silly as any boy who had ever been in the garden, and felt, in truth, so vain; inflated, and foolish, that when the Fairy, who soon saw that she need no longer be on her guard, and should soon subdue poor Harry, informed him that she had a fresh batch of sweetmeats of a new kind *expressly* for him, ordered by telegraph from her Paris confectioner's, and produced her box with two beautiful large mauve-coloured and white ones inside, Harry eagerly accepted them. They were now quite close outside the summer-house; and then the Fairy looked so affectionately at him, and told him so tenderly that he could do nothing in the world so well to please her as swallow them both down for her sake, that he took one between his finger and thumb, and was *just* going to pop it into his mouth, as she told him, when, whether the Boots kicked again accidentally, or the Fairy was so much engaged in giving him sweetmeats that she did not see there was a stone in the way, I cannot say, but Harry fell down with a tremendous crash right on

the hard pebbly garden path, and lost his sweetmeats, his peony flower, and even the very hat on his head. The Fairy screamed, but never gave him even a finger by way of assistance; poor Harry felt a dreadful pain in his side, and the Boots did their best to help him on his legs again.

When he did so, and once more stood on his feet, he was surprised at the change wrought in that short space of time. It *might* have been the shock of the tumble that cleared his vision; it might have been that the loss of the Fairy's gifts had bewildered his mind; but, at all events, one thing was quite certain, and that was, that things were not as they appeared before. In the first place, the sun had come out from behind a cloud, and the Fairy Flirtaway stood in a spot no longer sheltered by over-arching trees, but where the light shone down fully upon her, and Harry was astonished when he beheld her changed appearance. Her rose-coloured flounced skirt was decidedly faded and the worse for wear; her butterflies looked cheap and tawdry; and

the bells which had so charmed his ear with their musical sounds, he found were made of old brass thimbles and worn-out children's toys. He noticed, also, in this intense light that her hair was false and her cheeks painted, while her expression no longer revealed an amiable character, and wore a winning smile, for there was the mark of an ever-during frown on her forehead, and a hard, cruel look about her mouth. In short, she seemed so completely and thoroughly altered, that Harry could not forbear exclaiming, "Oh, I thought you were a *real* Fairy, and you are only like Lily's old doll, after all!"

And now, indeed, if he had been mistaken about the Fairy's intentions before, he could not mistake them now, as she exclaimed "*Real!*" with a look which might have transfixed anybody less bold than Harry or the Boots; and, snatching the magic key from her pocket, did her best to lock Harry into the summer-house before he had any time to make any more observations about her. The Boots, however, helped him in

this strait, for he was so bruised and bewildered, that he had hardly any strength left to fight his own battles, and, giving a great hop just in time, took poor Harry well out of the Fairy's reach, and landed him safely on the high ridge which formed the boundary of her flower-borders. Then the strange, unaccountable mist cleared away, and he saw that the same sunshine which fell upon the Fairy Flirtaway, and exposed the deceit and trickery of her charms, fell also upon the purple mountain and the distant scenery, and lit up the silver streams and rock-crowned summits, and shone upon the wooded vale beneath with a joyous light, which seemed full of life and happiness, and tempted him to return again towards them, to behold anew their eternal beauty. Then, too, he gazed down into the garden again, and saw the flowers that looked so gay within its borders were artificial ones, and had no root (as the Boots proved by pulling up a couple of them and investigating them), and that they, too, were dingy and faded, as if they had been placed there in all sea-

sons and weathers. And now, as he glanced towards the summer-house, a rent in the roof disclosed from their high point of view a part of the interior, and they both looked in. It seemed papered with innumerable portraits, nearly all grossly flattering, of the Fairy herself, and beyond that there was nothing—nothing, save a broken-down table, on whose surface reposed the weary heads of three or four of the captured little boys. They seemed half asleep, and half gazing on the gaudy pictures on the walls. The ground was covered with dust and fungus and broken fragments from the roof; and the pretty suits of the little boys—poor Tommy's among the number—were rapidly spoiling in the prevailing damp and rottenness of the place, and on their cheeks were marks of tears. The Fairy gave them nothing—one looked quite thin and starved—except now and then through the window (for she never entered the summer-house herself) a small dish of bruised fruit, strawberries or apples, when she found time to gather them in the garden, and had nothing else to do. And



‘I WAS QUITE ANXIOUS TO GET HIM OUT OF THE WAY.’—Page 121.

for these the poor little fellows blessed their "good Fairy," and gave her many thanks, mistaking it for a feast, and counting those poor gifts of rotten apples and mildewed strawberries priceless, as misers count their gold. And there they stayed, having no courage to brave the freedom of the rough and desolate lane. Oh, foolish little boys!

Meanwhile, the Fairy Flirtaway sat down in a very cross temper by the side of her garden-walk, at which distance Harry observed she began to look ever so much nicer again, and, bringing forth her work-basket, commenced to sew up a number of fresh butterflies for her shoes, which was evidently one of her chief occupations. Harry heard her say to herself as she plied her needle,—and let us hope it enlightened him completely, as to her regard for him,—“I wish that stupid boy hadn’t tumbled down in *my* garden. I shall have to tell the gardener to roll the walk again, as, of course, I don’t like it to be untidy. I’m sure he must have seen I was quite anxious to get him out of the way before anybody else

came!" And upon that she stuck, at least, half-a-dozen new butterflies on her head for ornament, and brought out a pot from her green-house, this time with peonies in it as big as cabbages, which she looked at with great satisfaction. Just as she had finished, another knock was heard at the gate, and off she tripped to it, leading in presently, with a smile sweeter than ever, *two* little boys, who were evidently bent upon going straight to the summer-house, and whom she kept one on each side of her, and talked first to one and then to the other. As Harry gazed into the road outside, he saw several more still coming, attracted, doubtless, by the gay flags and the triumphal arch (though many of a more serious and sensible disposition passed by); and without waiting to see the fate—no doubt a cruel one—of the boys within the garden and the boys without, Harry and the Boots, with one accord, gave a tremendous hop and leap, and soon reached the fresh pure air, and trod on the soft elastic turf of the mountain summit.

"Ah!" exclaimed Harry to the Boots,

with whom he was now on the best of terms, and evidently forgetting the part he had lately played, "what an absurd Fairy that is, and how *is* it she manages to lock up all these poor little fellows?" But the Boots replied, "Nay, rather, what foolish little boys! As the Fairy says, 'They *will* come to my gate and crowd into my garden, and help to spoil it too; and if they are so *very* ready to drink tea in the summer-house, they must take the consequences. Of course, I know that I have a magic key to let them in, but neither I nor anybody else can open the door again and pull them out.'"

It seemed to Harry rather a heartless speech of the Fairy Flirtaway; but then, as the Boots remarked, fairies were expected and encouraged "to behave as sich," and it was, undoubtedly, perfectly just and true. So Harry began to inhale with as much pleasure as he could the keen exhilarating breeze on the high mountain-top, and never said a word to the Boots about the pain he still had to a great extent in his left side!

CHAPTER XI.

THE BREEZE AND THE CLOUD.

THEY sat quietly on the mountain-top for a long while, and as it was very lofty they had an excellent bird's-eye view of the surrounding country. Of course, they naturally talked a good deal about the various sights they had seen, and the Boots made a good many wise observations upon their last adventure and the Fairy Flirt-away's garden.

"She would have been a dear little thing," said he, "if she had only been a little less vain and had dressed sensibly, and if the boys had kept out of her garden. On the other hand, the boys would be ever so much better, and would never get into such trouble and spoil their best clothes in the dusty old

summer-house, if they hadn't been extremely foolish and conceited, and greedy about the flowers and sweetmeats."

"But why," inquired Harry, "does the Fairy seem to take such delight in catching little boys?"

"For fun," said the Boots. "She likes chasing them in her peculiar way; and it's for just the same reason—fun—that the boys think her garden so delightful."

This seemed about the true state of the case, only, as the Boots explained to Harry, it was a pity for others besides foolish little boys, as in the ideas of people generally it gave rather a bad name to fairies on the whole, and they didn't get helped in important matters as much as they ought. In fact, it had come to be considered rather funny if you were a sedate fairy, and didn't set up a garden and try to catch boys. Though, as the Boots remarked, "When you properly *considered* it, nothing was more really unfairy-like than to use your magic powers in such a foolish way; adding, "that these were things which people might see in time

when they thought about it more. At present they didn't make many inquiries on the subject."

Nothing could be more pleasant than their seat on the summit of the beautiful purple mountain, and on all sides were views so extensive and delightful, that they scarcely knew which to admire most. The Fairy Flirtaway's domain in the valley beneath had dwindled into a green speck, quivering with the hot air and moist vapours, from which, on this breezy height, they were entirely free. All things were spread out as in a map before them—hills, plains, towns, villages nestling in their white orchard bowers, placid blue lakes and winding streams, which on the West became one broad and flowing river, rolling onwards in the distance till it reached the mighty sea. And there, a long way off, ships with bright sails glided peacefully on its dim blue horizon, some coming to the towns upon the coasts, others outward-bound. Harry could see all the world.

Nobody would have guessed that Deep-Sea Land and its coral groves existed, and its

countless inhabitants dwelt merrily beneath that placid surface. But as the Boots said, "Who would ever think there were such strange things, and so entirely different from each other, to be seen here on the land?" Each village, they told Harry, had something to show quite of its own, but it would take far too much time to visit them all. If they did, Harry "would never get home in time for tea."

"Ah!" said Harry, "I must not forget my promise; but I have still several hours to spare, and in that time we can go a long way if you take some good big hops!"

I should tell you that in all these countries one hour was as long as several of our days, and yet the time was so accommodating, that when you got home, if you had been ever so long away, the clock in *your* house had perhaps only gone on for about five minutes. This was because all the clocks in the new countries were taken care of by a very useful lady, called Miss History, and she always made *her* time go to the furthest, and stretched it out a great deal. It was a very good plan,

and in consequence anybody who went out where she presided over them could easily get home in time for tea or supper, as the case might be.

The Boots now pointed to a large enclosed piece of land a good way off, with a number of buildings in the middle of it, with fine towers and pinnacles, as well as Harry could make out for the distance, and asked him if he wouldn't like to visit that country and see the famous town of Chattermuch. As the Boots said they were the queerest people in the world who lived there, and could do what nobody else could, as he would see when he got there, Harry replied that he thought he should.

"Well, then," said the Boots, "I needn't trouble now to take any more hops. We have only to call a cloud and go."

Accordingly, they looked over the steepest side of the mountain, which seemed to lead down into a dark ravine, and, catching sight of a small cloud, taking its ease a few yards beneath, spoke to it, and said they wanted to take a journey to Chattermuch

Town. The Cloud seemed rather stupid, but said that it knew the place very well, only he must speak to the Breeze first, as if he didn't happen to be going that way it would be very inconvenient. Whereupon the Cloud stayed quite five minutes whispering with the Breeze: no doubt trying to make a bargain, for as it stepped up on the summit it said, "that in consideration of the travellers being Harry and the Boots, the Breeze had consented to do it cheap." Harry and the Boots thanked the Cloud cordially, and leaping elegantly into the midst of it, made themselves comfortable for their journey. The Breeze gave a shrill whistle among the grey crags and boulders which stood boldly forth from the green turf of the mountain-top, and without a moment's loss of time they fled faster than they could have imagined from their pleasant resting-place.

"I had no idea," said Harry, "that clouds flew about so quickly. I always thought they were peaceful, quiet, silly sort of things."

"Thank you," replied the Cloud, who, of course, overheard, "all the same; clouds couldn't travel very far without a brisk Breeze to push them on. Ours is a noted one, which never travels at less speed than forty miles a day, and always goes in the same direction. He's as steady as an old coach-horse."

"Ah!" said Harry, "it's delightful!" And it was. They had such a view all over the country, and then the Cloud had such nice soft cushions for them to rest on, and went along so smoothly, that it seemed more like a *dream* of travelling than anything else. No noise, no fuss, no bustle; no turning in and out of crowded carriages, and losing first one's luggage, and then one's-self, as is the fate so often of us poor travellers in our little railway trains. It was all quiet, gliding motion, and soft repose, and dream-like rest, while the green fields and trees below flew backwards with a rapidity at which Harry was astonished. In fact, he enjoyed his journey so much that he became quite sorry when it drew to

a close ; and when the Breeze, slackening its pace little by little, allowed them to drift gradually on to a huge cloudbank, such as you may have seen piled up in the sky on a sultry day when thunder is muttering in the distance. It had no life, such as the little clouds possessed, but merely supplied the material from which they were formed. Often had Harry wished to fly off to a beautiful golden-tipped cloud-pile to see what it was like, and who lived there ; and now, there he was !—his wish gratified—as one's wishes are sometimes when one does not in the least expect it. Before, however, he had time to take even a glance at the new scenes around him, the Boots thanked the Cloud and the Breeze, saying, he supposed they “would be always handy if they wanted them again, and that they hoped the former would take the opportunity of amusing itself with its companions.”—(of whom there were several in a crowd together, all apparently belonging to different persons and families in the city), and then immediately gave a great spring down to the far-off

ground, and landed Harry just opposite an ancient archway in a high thick wall, something like the great wall of China, only it wasn't kept so well, as there were lots of weeds growing on it.

It was the wall surrounding the city of Chattermuch, which had been built by one of its oldest kings in former times, the king Sayadeal, who was a very wise, nice sort of man, and did his best to protect the town, of which he was justly proud. The gates were evidently kept closed against new-comers, which was, of course, a very proper arrangement, as otherwise it might have made a good deal of confusion in the town, and obstructed the traffic of the inhabitants, to say nothing of enemies, who might do much worse mischief. There was, however, a bell conveniently situated on the ramparts, with a rope to ring it, so that anybody who made noise enough was sure to be able to get in sooner or later.

Over the door was carved the beautiful legend, "Nothyng butt conversationne is spoke Here," with a most elegant bell and

clapper sculptured on a knight's shield for the city arms. Our travellers gave the bell on the ramparts a resounding peal, and patiently awaited the result.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW HARRY AND THE BOOTS STORMED
CHATTERMUCH TOWN.

AFTER the last echoes of the big bell had died away,—which took time, as each separate tower of the city expected to have a voice in the matter, and kept up its own peculiar echo in great state,—Harry heard a noise overhead, which soon manifested itself as two voices engaged in hot altercation. Presently one voice exclaimed, “There, I told you so—foreigners! And very queer! They must on no account be let in.”

Harry and the Boots looked up, and saw a fat little man straining to peep over the parapet at them, which exertion served to make him rather red in the face, and a good deal more cross. When he saw that he was

perceived, he exclaimed, "Oh, bother! don't look at me like that!" and disappeared. They thought this was rather uncivil behaviour, and were debating whether they should take the town by force, and skip right over the wall,—which would have been quite as bad manners on their part,—or abandon their idea of seeing it altogether, when another very fat and still redder face looked over the parapet at them, smiling, and a most *suave* and courteous voice said, "Never mind *him*. Would you like it in the 'Court Jumbler' or the 'Fashionable Cackle'? They're both excellent periodicals, and will be published at five o'clock."

The Boots laughed, and Harry replied that he really "didn't know what the gentleman meant." "Oh, I mean," said that personage, who had overheard the remark, "the news of your arrival,—of course. The fact is," he went on, "our royal Sovereign, the King Chit-Chat, who is the most agreeable person in the world—you must be introduced to him to-morrow—is always so delighted to hear all the news, that he offers

five new sixpences to anybody who will bring him the *newest* piece of news; and the consequence is, we get such a quantity of news generally, new and old, good and bad, that we don't know what to do with it. The town gets quite full occasionally, and has to be cleared out. But it's only to make room for more. In consequence, we know such a lot here,—you'd be surprised.—The individual I was talking to just now—rude creature, wasn't he?—was only trying to get the start of me,—gone off to put you in his muddling paper, the 'Chattermuch Turntides'; but I've '*done*' him capitally, as I have set up a room for printing the latest editions of the 'Court Jumbler' here—inside the gateway; and one's just been sent to the king himself; so I shouldn't wonder if he were to invite you to dinner immediately. Saw you coming by express cloud, with my new electric telescope, which *does* magnify,—in fact, it made you bigger than I see you are in reality. Wonderful thing, isn't it? I don't know what your names are, but I put 'Extraordinary Probable Arrival of a Gentleman



‘HE IMMEDIATELY GAVE A SHRIEK OF DELIGHT.’—Page 137.

and his Boots.' Well now,—ah! where was I? Oh, you see that's why I and the other fellow were quarrelling. By the way, what *are* your names?"

At this he looked so eager and interested, that Harry was foolish enough to tell this voluble little gentleman, who immediately gave a shriek of delight and flew off, his feet clattering inside on the stone steps of the gateway tower with such a noise that you could hear it half a mile off.

"Well," said the Boots, "if you hadn't been quite so quick, I would have told you not to say anything till the old gentleman had let us in. I expect we shall have to stay here for about an hour till he comes back."

And so they had, as Harry found to his cost, for he was tired and hungry, and naturally wanted to get to his journey's end, and not to be kept waiting hours outside town-gates, while people were talking about him. During that time one or two more sober-looking persons than they should have expected after this, came to the walls at

different parts, and looked at them through their eye-glasses, making various remarks as ideas occurred to them. To judge from their looks, they seemed rather disappointed. One said, "Well, you know, it's quite clear the young gentleman hasn't got boots as big as haystacks." To which the other replied, with his head on one side, his eyebrows elevated, and an air of crushing wisdom and importance, "Ah, you know, these things depend on climate—on climate. I have been persuaded of that ever since I had an opportunity of witnessing its effects on a great-aunt of mine,—(bother these weeds, how they sting!—the Town Council ought to take it up)—most extraordinary thing you ever saw—" Upon which he began to tell a long tale, with a great deal of strutting backwards and forwards, and his hands under his little coat-tails. Evidently the "great-aunt" was so well known that nobody listened; but then that doesn't matter at all when a person is very much engaged about himself; and long before it had come to its proper conclusion, a great panting and puff-

ing was heard in the gateway-tower, and the civil, fat little old gentleman in another moment put his head over the parapet, mopping his face, which was redder than ever, with a yellow silk pocket-handkerchief.

“It’s gone!” cried he. “Oh, dear!—express edition to the Palace. And so—oh! bless me—so you’re still here. I thought you might be gone. Well now, that’s a remarkable occurrence, I take it. ‘Great Sitting of the Young Gentleman called Harry and his Boots outside our Tower-gate for more than an Hour!’ Looks well, doesn’t it? Yes, I must, indeed—return in a minute, you know—it is quite worth while!”

So saying, he flew this time in a breathless condition from the wall, and again they heard his clattering boots echoing far and wide—once more they were left alone; and there fell again around them an utterly doleful silence.

Harry thought he was mad, and began to be quite in despair; but the Boots said, “The best way to get into this town is to hop right into the midst of it. I’m sorry

now we landed outside the wall and went in for politeness, as there is always this tiresome delay for travellers."

"But why," asked Harry, "don't all the inhabitants come and look at us, and take more interest in our arrival, as there seems such a fuss about it going on inside?"

"Because," replied the sagacious Boots, "it isn't their way. I can assure you that when we are once inside-the town they will take very little notice of us. What they are so much occupied with are their own conversations, latest editions, and the king's bounties,—in short, the *news* of us, but not *us* at all."

Harry thought this very funny. Being of less consequence than one's own news seemed something like being of less importance than one's own shadow; but the Boots assured him it was the custom of the town, and everything so far had certainly gone to prove it.

"Now," said the Boots, "though it is bad manners, we'll give a hop which will land us right in the centre of the city."

Harry willingly agreed, and in another second they had flown high above the wall and the provoking gateway-towers, and had dropped gently down on a grass-plot in front of the finest buildings there. In the portico, which was very grand indeed, with gold pillars and much carved work, stood a handsome old gentleman, dressed in the most extraordinary style in gold and tissue-paper.

He had a gold crown, pantaloons, stockings, and shoes, and a crimson waistcoat; and then he had a flowing robe, with twenty capes one over the other, like cabmen used to wear in rainy weather, made of the most silky tissue-paper, in different colours, and ornamented with printed things all over, which, however, it was impossible to read, as it was in the smallest type, and all mixed up together. In fact, he was all gold inside, and tissue-paper outside; but, notwithstanding his curious costume, his manners were so pleasant, and his bearings so graceful and high-bred, that Harry instinctively began to like him.

“Well done!” cried he, on seeing Harry and the Boots fly down in the centre of his lawn. “Very good. Now,” turning to six-and-twenty footmen, each with a trumpet and banner, who stood near, “you had better let the papers and the people know—they like it.”

And, accordingly, the six-and-twenty footmen ran off as hard as their legs could carry them, blowing their trumpets at a tremendous rate, and, in fact, rousing the whole town.

“Yes,” said his Majesty (for, of course, this was the King), looking thoughtful for a minute, “I dare say you’re surprised at the way we do things here. But you will soon get accustomed to it, and, I must say, with some pardonable amount of pride, that we are the first city in the world for news! Think of that!”

Harry was only too delighted to find somebody who could even imagine he and the Boots *were* surprised, as it looked hopeful; and the King went on to say, “Now they will be as busy as bees, measuring the

leap, and so on; but, never mind, come in and have a chop, and tell me all about yourselves, for if old Mr. Busybody's latest editions were correct you have been a long while outside the gate of the town. I really thought of coming to fetch you myself," added the kind old King; "but there, you know, a king can't always do as he likes—should have spoiled old Busybody's little game." Here he laughed and nodded, and exclaimed, "There you see—they're at it again."

Harry looked round and beheld crowds of people advancing in the direction of the lawn, with Mr. Busybody, the active editor of the 'Court Jumbler,' at their head, and furnished with scientific instruments and measuring-lines. One of the twenty-six footmen now came running up to say that the rest of the townspeople had gone with the cross personage outside the gate to take measurements there, and that when the investigation was completed they meant to celebrate the occasion by a grand dinner at the Town Hall, at which it was humbly

hoped his most gracious Majesty would condescend to be present. As for Harry and the Boots, nobody, except the King, took any notice of them at all.

The King said he should be very glad, if he had finished his chop in time; but as soon as he got inside the Palace he assured Harry he would sooner have a chop a yard square to eat than go to one of their dinners. "*Too* fatiguing, you know," said he. "Pooh! tish!" (this Harry found was a favourite exclamation of his Majesty when excited), "very good people, very fond of news; but do bother immensely!" With that he skipped upstairs with the agility of a schoolboy, and, throwing open a door, displayed the dearest little room in the world, with a table covered with a gold and white cloth, and covers laid for three, and flying to an easy chair, threw his royal form into it with so much energy, that his long tissue-paper robes and his twenty capes made a noise equal to half-a-dozen steam-engines.

"Dear, dear!" said he, "I'm afraid I've mixed up the last court poem with the ac-

count of the ‘Rise and Progress of Chatter-much Town.’ Can’t be helped. Must get a new gown.” And then he ate his chop with zeal, and bade Harry and the Boots eat theirs too. The Boots sat on a chair and ate heartily. Harry ventured to ask him why he wore a robe so liable to get crumpled and “mixed up,” to say nothing of its being so likely to tear, and also why it was printed all over with what children call “reading.”

“Why, upon my word, “I don’t know,” said he, “unless it’s because they’re so anxious to tack everything on to me. I talk to ’em, you know, back,—in exchange,—and that pleases the whole town. I’ve a hundred and five old robes, all torn to rags with wearing, and so on, because I’m not like a person that can stay in one place and sit still for the sake of my clothes, and of course there’s not much that can be done with them now; but nobody seems to mind, and so I don’t. Pooh! Oh, no! old robe—why should they? I dare say they’ll mend and make up nicely for Seraphina.”

Harry inquired who Seraphina was, and

the old King said, "Well, she's my niece, but she isn't often here. She was so fond of news, that she went out to Otaheite to see whether the black men played the piano well, and I haven't seen her since. Remarkable girl. Hope she'll turn up some day. Talking of young people, however, reminds me—you *must* see my adopted children; they *are* a show; in fact, they make as much noise as half Chattermuch Town put together."

And rising up, the hearty old King, who was determined Harry and the Boots should have a full view of all the sights in that celebrated city, walked briskly forth and led the way.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT THEY SAW THERE.

THE King, and Harry and the Boots had not proceeded very far from the Palace before they came to a large open square, with a great ladder set in the midst of it, which reached right up into the huge pile of clouds which Harry had noticed on his first approach to Chattermuch Town.

Crowds of people were constantly ascending; and as he looked up he caught glimpses here and there of numbers more, comfortably seated in various parts of the cloud, which certainly looked soft and inviting, and was situated some considerable height above the ground. He could only, however, see so much of the inner side of the cloud as rents in it occasionally disclosed. It was a most

curious spectacle. Harry couldn't help inquiring of the King why so many people went there, and if there was any view or other attraction to induce them to take the trouble to ascend the long ladder.

"Well! as for view," replied his Majesty, "I can't say there is much, unless you get near one of the peepholes, which often get filled up. But it's convenient: if anybody overworks himself with talking and so on down here, he goes directly for a change of air to the cloud, and it's wonderful how well it agrees with him. We all go there more or less, and it's surprising how comfortable it is. Quite charming!"

Just at that moment they passed under a dark cloud-patch, which was very much smaller, and was almost isolated from the large one; and while Harry was wondering with all his might what there could be so very delightful in a cloud which evidently never went anywhere and had no view, like the smart little cloud-coach they had arrived in, he heard a most melancholy but distinct sound of a voice proceeding from it, while

the little cloud was violently agitated, till at last a pair of black legs, the feet of which were cased in a pair of very untidy old slippers, were seen poking through. Immediately after a noise was heard, something like the squeaks of a tin flute ; but, oh ! how melancholy the squeaks were ; and then the voice sang to a most doleful tune the following song :—

“O dear ! the cloud is full of damp—

O dear ! but weeds are on the wall ;

Yet sitting here gives me the cramp,

Alas ! why was I born at all ?

Chorus. Alas ! why was I born at all ?”

Then the voice sighed “Heigho !” deeply, and commenced again :—

“O dear ! the town’s a dismal spot,

The nettles sting upon the wall ;

Yet cold and foggy is my lot

Up here ! Why *was* I born at all ?

Chorus. Alas ! why *was* I born at all ?”

The Boots laughed, the King took out his pocket-handkerchief and wiped his eyes, and Harry exclaimed, “What *can* he mean, and who is he ?”

"Well," said the King, "it's Mr. Two-Rhymes, the town-poet. I'm sorry for him, but what *can* I do? He *will* sit in that horrid little black cloud, and he *won't* come down, not even when I told him I'd ordered ducks and green peas for dinner! I can't help thinking people must like it, you know, when they go so far as that," added the King, reflectively, for ducks and peas were his favourite dish; "but it sounds uncomfortable, don't it?"

By this time the poet had just finished singing a third stanza, and ended with a more doleful wail than ever, "Alas! why was I born at all?"

"Nobody asked you to be, I'm sure," said a pert damsel, with a bonnet stuck all over with flowers, a pink and blue dress flounced to the waist, and twenty streamers, of different shades of ribbon, flying from her chignon, who was just then ascending the ladder with sprightly steps.

"No, they *didn't*," said the poet, in an ill-used tone, and, tuning up his pipe, he sang in as melancholy a strain as ever:—

“They never asked me why I came,
They never told me where to go;
Indeed, I think they ’re much to blame,
I only wish I ’d told them so !”

The pert damsel had by this time disappeared in the cloud, and was, no doubt, occupied with her own affairs; she *didn't* trouble herself much about the poor poet; and the King, who had been obliged to use his pocket-handkerchief several times, now called out, “Come, come, Mr. Two-Rhymes, don't take on so. You know, if you *will* sit in that nasty black cloud—I'm sure it casts a shadow over a third of the town—you can't expect to be cheerful. But I wish you wouldn't! It would be so much better for you and everybody else too, if you'd only come down. You want new slippers, too. Come, and I'll take you to the new shoe-shop; there's one opened next door to the Palace.”

But even this inducement—you see the good King bethought himself of everything that was most attractive—produced no result. The melancholy poet swung his two black

legs slowly backwards and forwards, began tuning up on his flute, and then remarked, in a quavering voice, that "he should be ill if he came to live in Chattermuch Town." To which the King replied, in a whisper,—for he didn't wish to hurt his feelings,—that "he thought he was ill now"; and they then left the poet's neighbourhood. The last Harry "saw" of him—if you could say so—was the little black cloud in a greater commotion even than before, and the two attenuated legs of poor Mr. Two-Rhymes swinging up and down in a more melancholy and helpless way than ever. He couldn't help asking a question or two about him, however, and so he inquired "Why the weeds prevented him from coming down?"

The King thought that it must be "because poets were more tidy than ordinary people,"—and there certainly seemed no other answer.

"What's he like?" asked Harry, who felt some pardonable curiosity about an individual at once so miserable and so determined to be so.

“I really don’t know,” replied his Majesty; “the last time I saw him he wore a wig; but that’s ages ago. He said it had the effect of increasing one’s wisdom very considerably. We never see anything but his legs, as the rest of him is always in the cloud. Perplexing, isn’t it?” added the King, whose heart had evidently been touched by the sad case of Mr. Two-Rhymes.

Harry and the Boots both remarked that the people in the large cloud seemed very happy and contented; and the King assured them everybody was so who went there, and that in consequence some people insisted on living there pretty nearly all their lives. “The Lord Mayor has gone there,” said he, “as well as the Minister of Inland Works, and the Town-Crier, and they won’t come down except just now and then to get through a little chattering. Rather a nuisance, that.” Harry thought it must be too, and, lifting up his voice, in a very high key shouted up to the people in the cloud, and asked them “what they saw there?” Two or three heads looked through a rent, one of them belonging to the

pert damsel who had made the saucy speech to the poet Two-Rhymes, and two others to gentlemen unknown to Harry, but which the King recognized as belonging to the Lord Mayor and the Prime Minister, who had just left Chattermuch Town the week before. They all replied that they saw ever such a deal; but as their views were quite different, Harry understood it must refer to scenes in the cloud, and not real views of the world beneath. The young lady with the ribbons said she saw four beaux, all extremely handsome, and with large purses in their pockets, and she didn't know which to choose; while at the same moment the Lord Mayor cried out that he saw a most stylish portrait of himself, with a coronet on his head, robes, and a gold wig, and a pigtail; and the Prime Minister was sure he was sitting in a bower, with a peal of bells ringing in his honour, and a board put up with "Universal Spring-Cleaning—the Prime Minister did it!" thereon, and, in short, they were so full of these various things, that they immediately disappeared, and a great noise of talking,

exclamations, and descriptions of all these sights could be heard, in which evidently at least a score of voices were engaged. But as the King told Harry and the Boots, it wasn't the least use staying there to talk with people who were in the cloud; as not only did they see altogether strange sights and totally different from anything below, but it was tiresome to shout so much, as they were really a good way off—farther than they looked. So they went on, the King, as usual, pointing out any objects of interest he thought they might like to see, and asking them numbers of questions about their travels. I have not recorded them, as they would become tedious; but the good King asked at least a thousand questions, and obtained a variety of information, which he seemed to be extremely delighted to have, although he did not in the least know what to do with it. One scheme, however, had thoroughly taken root in his mind, and that was, to dig up old Primitive Prim, pyramid and all, and send a deputation straight off for him to Rory-Tory Island.

Harry told him it was a long way off, and, for all he knew, the island, which was isolated and no doubt volcanic, might have entirely disappeared; but nothing would satisfy the old King but an attempt to bring him to the town, at all events; and calling Mr. Busybody, who was passing, to him, he told him he must really exert himself and endeavour to fit out a body of capable persons to undertake the mission, the expense of which he meant to defray himself.

Mr. Busybody said, in his usual way, "If your Majesty really means it—why, really—yes, a capital idea! It will add a whole supplement to the 'Court Jumbler'!"—upon which he ran off to devise a "latest telegram" of his ideas, the King's, and everybody else's upon the subject. It was singularly lucid. As this took time, the King despatched three competent gardeners, with pickaxes and shovels, and an active gentleman, to find Mr. Busybody, which, when they did, they tugged him forcibly to a vessel in the small river outside the city wall, and immediately set sail for Rory-Tory Island.

Poor Mr. Busybody felt acutely leaving his little printing-room and his electric telescope in the gateway-tower, and uttered many a heart-searching lament; but consoled himself at last by exacting a promise from his brother that he would peep through the telescope for at least three hours before he was expected to return, and on no account allow the 'Chattermuch Turntides' to report the first intelligence of him. After this business was finished, the King recollected his adopted children, and said they might as well have a look at them now, though he was afraid most of the clever boys were gone.

"They do a little work," said he, "for the town and for me, such as potting flowers, mending boots, patching clothes, and so on; but they spend most of their time blowing trumpets, talking, and, in fact, making a confounded noise. I'm told it's a good thing by everybody, and certainly nobody minds, or I'm sure I should not allow it. But it's quite part of the show, so to say."

And so, indeed, it seemed. For, taking a few more turns, they arrived at one of those

grand buildings, the towers of which showed so conspicuously in the distance (the next grandest belonged to a rich merchant, who kept hunters, with mother-of-pearl saddles, and had silver dining-tables, and altogether spent his money very usefully indeed, being quite happy as long as he was the town's talk); and from thence proceeded such a clamour, as with all its noise they had never yet heard in Chattermuch Town.

Passing under an elaborately sculptured archway, they entered a small chamber, beautifully decorated with statues, stained-glass windows, scrolls with poems of the poet Two-Rhymes, and so many fine things, that Harry was quite astonished. He was still more so when they reached the apartment, or rather hall, whence the noise proceeded, and saw about a hundred boys, dressed in the most costly fashion, and sitting each side of a long table covered with letters, tea-pots, tea-cups, sausages, and a number of things, which altogether made something very like a "litter." "I thought," said Harry, "from what you said, that these

were clever boys you had engaged to do your work; and they seemed to be playing at a game, and also to be dressed as if they were very rich."

"So they are," said the King. "No poor boy, however clever he was, could possibly gain admittance into this fine building, as every one of these boys who live here has paid a bag-full of new half-crowns into the bank for being allowed to come. It's considered a great honour, I suppose, because the hall is so fine, and the rich boys do all they can to come here. They liked to be asked to the Palace, to the best children's parties, and to see their names in the papers. And as the soldier-boys and the sailor-boys, and the rest, run off with all the other grand buildings, and the prizes in them, why, it's only fair, I suppose, the rich boys should have a chance of living in a nice large house, with a hall where they can play about, too. You see they are playing their favourite Fox-and-goose game."

"What is that?" asked Harry, who noticed that the boys were far too busy with their

sports to notice them, and only recognized the King by taking off their caps and putting them on again. "They only seem to scuffle about a good deal."

"The two boys sitting at the top and bottom of the table," explained the King, "are called foxes, and the rest of the boys on each side call themselves the geese. And when a goose wants to do some work,—mend the town-pump, for instance,—he tells all the rest of the boys what he is going to do, and the boys on his side of the table back him up, and the boys opposite scream, and try to prevent him, and throw orange-peel at him; and if he shouldn't be able to fetch in the pump with all this opposition, why, it would have to be left outside."

"But suppose," said Harry, "the pump *really* wanted mending?"

"Pooh — tish — hem!" said the King, greatly disturbed; "I declare I don't know. The boys don't look at it in that light! Perhaps the town tinker would patch it up for the time somehow, but it's hard to say. The foxes are always trying each to get boys

over to his side of the table, and they 're knowing old boys, I can tell you."

"It seems to me," said Harry, "that they wouldn't do the work if it wasn't for the game, and that they wouldn't play the game if the building wasn't so grand."

"No doubt a great many wouldn't be bothered," replied his Majesty; "but a hall lined with red velvet is nice, and a table spread with perpetual tea and muffins is not a bad sight. I don't come here as often as I used, but when I do, except for the noise, I find it very amusing. Sometimes they come to such a quarrel that they have pretty nearly all to be turned out, and fresh boys come in. That's when the leading fox-boy can't get his way about something, and turns cross. It's a pretty game," added the King, reflectively; "and, considering that the work for the town is very stupid and interrupting sometimes, very well played."

One of the foxes and his party were now all of them engaged in throwing orange-peel, and, I am sorry to say, even sausages and weak tea, at one poor little fellow who was

trying manfully to exhibit a new kind of broom to sweep everybody's door-steps, and which at last he was obliged to put away in the great cupboard; and amidst a tremendous uproar of cheering, hissing, and screaming, which quite filled Chattermuch Town, the King, Harry and the Boots went out.

CHAPTER XIV.

PRIMITIVE PRIM'S NOSE IS PUT OUT OF JOINT.

HARRY felt rather relieved at getting into an atmosphere of comparative quiet, and the Boots, who had hitherto made few observations on account of the good nature of King Chitchat, who did all the honours, now observed that as they had seen one or two of the principal sights of Chattermuch Town, though not by any means all of them, it would be better to leave, as they could easily pay another visit to it. But the good King would by no means hear of it, as he said he particularly wished them to be present on the arrival of Primitive Prim, if the deputation succeeded in digging him up; and he hoped they would help him to entertain the old gentleman, as he thought

it must have been dull for him in Rory-Tory Island, and all he wanted evidently was a good rousing up.

In consequence, the Boots advised Harry to stay, which, on the whole, he seemed very willing to do, as he was a wonderful fellow for seeing everything, and enjoyed King Chitchat's company exceedingly, he was such an easy-going, gentlemanly, kind-hearted old man. They were all on the point of returning to the Palace to rest and refresh themselves, when they heard a tremendous noise in the direction of the town-gate, and looking towards it, beheld a vast crowd of people all talking at the top of their voices, which were pitched at a very high key. Harry could not hear what they said; but presently one of the King's footmen came running up to say that the deputation to Rory-Tory Island had just returned, and that "they were fetching the gentleman in the pyramid from the vessel in a wheelbarrow, and everybody was reading out loud about it in the papers," which, of course, accounted for the noise. Several other

persons also came with the news; and last came Mr. Busybody's brother, with the 'Court Jumbler,' and also the editor of the 'Turntides,' each of which journals had two extra sheets, which they had been so busy printing that this was the reason they had been delayed. They both came up breathless and in such a hurry that they fell on all fours, and a mischievous breeze, which saw how it was, made the papers fly out of their hands into a pool of water, so that nobody could read them!

The King smiled, the two gentlemen got up, looking very doleful and rubbing their knees, and on observing the accident to the beautiful editions of the 'Court Jumbler' and the 'Turntides,' were so affected, that they were obliged to sit down on a seat which happened to be near and dry their eyes with their pocket-handkerchiefs. Upon this, the King, who always encouraged the praiseworthy zeal of his subjects for the public benefit, sent for the town beadle and bade him fish out the poor bedabbled papers from the puddle, when they were immediately des-

patched to the royal laundress to wash and iron, and dry on the clothes-horse in the Palace kitchen; so that these two excellent persons were comforted, and the King was not disappointed of sooner or later having his news.

The King now gave orders that the deputation should bring Primitive Prim straight off to the Palace and make him comfortable in the courtyard in the interior, which was nice and sandy; and he didn't feel sure whether Mr. Prim would like to go in his sitting-room, though he quite hoped to persuade him eventually; and, accordingly, the footman ran off in high glee to say that "they was to wheel him directly to our house." The footman always talked of the Palace as "our house," and was very proud of it. And then the King, Harry, the Boots, and the two editors, who were anxious about their papers, all flocked together to the great quadrangle in the centre of the King's Palace. It was a nice large convenient spot, with a fountain at one end, a grass-plot in the middle, and a clothes-line at the other

end, with the King's stockings hung out on it, of which, as they were not his best ones, there was a large variety, all of different patterns, as it was washing-day at the Palace. The chamber-maid had just hung a grey pair up, with blue and yellow spots on them; but they did not look to advantage just then, as they were very much attenuated by the wringing-machine, and looked as if no legs could by any possibility get into them.

"We'll stand here," said the King, turning his back on the stockings, which sight he did not much relish, as everybody knew whom they belonged to, and, somehow, wrung-out stockings don't add to one's dignity; so everybody else turned their backs too, and pretended they hadn't seen anything but the fountain, and didn't know there was such a thing as washing-day in the world. That was true politeness. As for Mary Ann, the chamber-maid, she hung up two pair more, out of spite, exclaiming, "Well, if ever! Of course, if the kitchen clothes-horse is all full of rubbishy papers and things, the stockings must go somewhere,

and I hope that'll be a warning to him, I do!" Whereupon she went in, appealing to cook in great wrath.

However, the King and his party had not long to wait at the fountain (which was not particularly amusing, as it had run dry the last week, and the King had to send round to the gardener to turn it on), for a loud rumbling noise was presently heard, accompanied by a sound of many footsteps, and before they had time to turn round, the deputation, accompanied by at least a dozen persons, advanced through the entrance towards them. Mr. Busybody came last, wheeling a large wheelbarrow, and supported on each side by two stout workmen, and they were all red in the face, and puffed and panted so, that it was evidently as much as they could do to get along. When, however, he had arrived opposite the fountain, he let down the two handles with a great bang, and nearly upset poor Primitive Prim, who had, indeed, been dug up, much against his will, pyramid and all, and now presented a sorry spectacle to Harry and the Boots, who had

seen him in his isolated grandeur in Rory-Tory Island. For the poor old gentleman gave an audible groan, and appeared very unhappy indeed. The groan, however, came from the very centre of him, for, alas!—it was *quite* true—Primitive Prim was curled round and round like a catherine-wheel, with his head in the middle and his feet on the outside, and appeared rapidly approaching some fearful climax in his existence. He had hollowed out a large cavity in the top of the pyramid, upon which he rested as comfortably as anybody could who was in such a dismal plight; and what with the journey, and the shaking about, and the annoyance of being dug up, he evidently had reason for groaning.

“Bless me!” said the King, “but you don’t mean to say he has been always in that condition?”

“Oh, dear, no!” replied the Boots; “when we saw him last he was sitting up in a rational posture. Perhaps he’s angry at being removed.”

“Yes, I am,” squeaked poor Primitive

Prim, in a muffled voice, from the middle of him; "they had no business to do it. But that's not it. I'm beginning! I said I should! And I shall be more venerable than ever now! Oh, dear!"

"Tish—pooh!" exclaimed the King; "let's look at it! Dear me. It is an individual, I declare,—who'd have guessed it? I say, old gentleman, don't you think you had better think twice about it? Can't go on in that way, you know."

"Yes, I shall," replied Primitive Prim, curling up tighter than ever; "I wish you wouldn't tease me so. Can't you see that I am endeavouring, as hard as ever I can, to become a Fossil? One would think you had no sense at all, any of you."

"Ah!" said the King, putting up his eye-glasses, and poking at poor Primitive Prim with his stick; "but you know you're as soft as ever. Don't you bother about it! I expect you've seen one of those curly-wurly things they find in the rocks, and it's gone up in your head!"

"It's no such thing!" screamed old Mr.

Prim, in a rage ; “ I know what I ’m about. I shall be the biggest fossil in the British Museum when you ’re nowhere, and I hope you will be too. I never knew such stupid people ! ”

On hearing this audacious speech applied to royalty, Mr. Busybody exclaimed, “ ‘ Remarkable Impudence of the Old Gentleman from Rory-Tory Island ’—excellent article ! ” and ran off, puffing, with renewed energy, to his sanctum in the city-gate, muttering, as he went, that “ that was all it was worth, and that he ’d had enough of the old party.”

The King, however, laughed immensely, and, turning to the two stout workmen, who now expressed their opinion that “ he were a curious warmint,” proposed that they should uncurl Primitive Prim by force.

It would be quite impossible to describe the wrath of that venerable old gentleman on hearing such a shocking and wicked idea uttered in his presence. He shook with rage, and declared that the first person who came near him he would kick black and blue ; and as his feet were still free, it had the effect of

preventing the two workmen from approaching him for a few moments. The King, however, gave a wink, and promised, in a whisper, sixpence apiece to the two men if they would undertake it; so, before old Mr. Prim could say another word, one of the men had seized his boots, and the other his arms, and were doing all they could to pull him out straight. They found it was harder work than they had imagined, as old Prim, who had the strength of a young lion in spite of his being so venerable, curled up again as fast as they undid him, spluttering with anger and exclamations the whole time. Just as everybody was beginning to wonder who would hold out longest, the wheelbarrow gave a sudden and unexpected lurch, and rolled out poor Primitive Prim with an impetus which sent him right along the gravel-walk to the fountain, into which he tumbled with a terrific splash before he had even time to cry "Oh!" Oh, what a splash there was! For the fountain had been in full play for quite ten minutes before!

This was an ordeal which even *he* couldn't



* A VERY DOLEFUL FACE ALL SHINING WITH WET APPEARED OVER THE EDGE OF THE FOUNTAIN-BASIN.—Page 173.

stand very long ; and before the King, Harry and the Boots, the workmen, and everybody else had recovered their wits and run off to see if he was quite drowned, a very doleful face all shining with wet and a long draggled beard appeared over the edge of the fountain-basin ; and as soon as they lent him a hand, Primitive Prim crawled out, dripping with water, but still bent like a bow,—and, throwing himself upon a little grass-plot which was near, in a very weak way,—lay there as if he were nearly done for.

As soon as he had recovered his voice, he said, “ My nose, as you see, is quite put out of joint ! And, in consequence, I am afraid I shall be obliged to give up the idea of being a fossil.”

And his nose, in truth, with the shock of the tumble, and the concussions he had experienced along the gravel-path, was, alas ! bent quite on one side ; and, as it had been a most venerable-looking feature, it was a very sad accident.

The King, however, who never *could* un-

derstand science properly, or why it was nicer than anything to be a fossil, exclaimed, "That's right! Never mind your nose; I'll tell John to fetch a bath-chair for you, and you must come in and have some dinner. I have some excellent toddy in the cupboard, and I am sure you must be hungry."

Poor Primitive Prim replied meekly that he thought he was, now he recollected it; and in a few more minutes Harry and the Boots had the satisfaction of seeing the poor old gentleman wheeled away into the Palace in a comfortable cushioned bath-chair, which must have been pleasant for his old bones after all, as he never once looked round at the pyramid. Shortly after the footman came out to order it to be brought in, as "the old gentleman, who," as he said, "ain't such a bad fellow, after all, leastways rather eccentric in his manners, was a-going to lecture on it after dinner, and liked to have it by him as a relish." Perhaps he meant relie.

And that was the last they saw of the little stone pyramid and Primitive Prim.

CHAPTER XV.

SHADOW-LAND.

HARRY and the Boots took one more stroll around the town, hearing, as usual, a great deal of talking, and the most talking generally about nothing in particular. One thing amused them, however, very much ; and that was, a very funny, fat man, who had a remarkable property of expanding like a soap-bubble, and who, accordingly, caused much inconvenience to his neighbours. All the celebrated wise men—the logicians—had been to see him, as it was quite against their laws that a person could be in two places at the same time, and they could make nothing of him. One of the wise men, who lived next door to him, had, indeed, brought an action against the fat gentleman for occupy-

ing his garden without lawful permission, as the latter had made a bet that he would be in his own garden and his neighbour's at the same time,—which, indeed, he was, and broke down the fence as he expanded into it.

There was a great chatter about it, and of course a great deal of quarrelling; but the judge decided that the stout gentleman had better in future keep within his own garden, while the wise gentleman would do well to move his house in case of accidents, as it was a bad thing having such a weak fence between oneself and such an eccentric and unaccountable neighbour. “There is no saying, you know,” said the judge, refreshing himself with a cup of tea after his speech, “where he might go to next. It's a serious thing.”

And everybody thought what the judge said was uncommonly good, only the worst was that after all the same thing might happen again any day, unless the whole of the stout gentleman's family were provided for in a large garden by themselves,—an island would be best,—and never had any

neighbours. Harry and the Boots couldn't help laughing; but they had little leisure left them to linger amidst the many scenes of Chattermuch Town: it was time for them to return to the Palace and bid the kind old King farewell. As they approached the grand entrance which they had noticed on their first arrival in the city, they saw King Chitchat standing within the portico as they had seen him before, only on this occasion he no longer wore his royal robes, but a flowing dressing-gown, with fifteen beautiful tassels at the bottom of it, which made even that look quite handsome and regal, particularly as it was made of purple dimity covered all over with gold sprigs. When he saw Harry and the Boots, he shook hands with them most cordially, and, on hearing they were going to leave immediately, expressed great sorrow, and ordered a large beef "pasty" to be brought from the larder at once, in order that they should be well provided with something to eat on their journey. The Boots inquired after the health of old Primitive Prim, who had now

been for many hours within the comfortable Palace; and the King replied that he had eaten the leg and wing of a goose, with pudding after, and though rather weak on his legs and rambling in his discourse, was, on the whole, as well as could be expected under the circumstances. And then, with many expressions of regret on both sides, our travellers and the King bid each other good-bye, and in another moment, by the aid of a most vigorous hop of the Boots high into the air, they had flown over the city wall, and found themselves once more outside the fair domain of King Chitchat, the beautiful and enterprising Chattermuch Town.

It seemed very silent—something like you feel after leaving the parrot-house at the “Zoo,” or a great room full of machinery, but, nevertheless, it was pleasant; and the Boots proposed that they should fly away from this part of the world now, and lose no time, as mamma was expecting him, and it was getting nearer tea-time than ever. So they flew away once more, right over the big cloud which hung above the busy town,

and into the midst of which Harry was now fully able to look, seeing many people indeed, but to his astonishment no beautiful scenes such as they had described, and nothing like them, only woolly cloud, and nothing more!

He asked the Boots how it was, and the Boots explained that when people went up into the cloud they always saw lots of pleasant sights which nobody else did, and that was why they were so fond of going there. "It doesn't in the least matter *your* not seeing them!" said they, laughing; "people always have nice visions who do nothing but sit in a cloud, and I suppose it's a sort of reward for the pains they take in going up the ladder to get there. It may not be a useful occupation, but it has wonderful attractions for the people of Chatter-much Town."

Harry was rather mystified, but consoled himself with munching at a corner of the pasty which he had tied round his neck with a piece of string to save trouble. It was excellent, and helped to put him quite in

good spirits. The cloud vanished out of their sight, and with it the last faint outline of the city towers; and on they went, and then mountains rose between them and the plain they had left—beautiful dark blue mountains, whose great crags were smitten by the golden sunbeams till they shone with answering fire, and down whose grassy or heather-covered slopes peaceful sheep nibbled and the wild deer sprang; and these, too, were left behind, and still they sped. Many other mountains did they pass, too, with valleys between and wide plains, till at last the sun sank beneath the horizon while they were still travelling, and the light became soft and subdued, and they no longer saw things as clearly as they had done before. They went on still, till they came to a land where was no house nor city, and where no man lived, and where it seemed as if nothing could ever break the peaceful silence.

This gentle spot was folded in amongst the blue hills, and therein, in the midst of the valley, reposed a lake so calm and smooth, that it seemed to exist only to mirror the stars

which paced onward in the sky above, or the moon who peeped down on it over the side of the nearest hill with her sad and thoughtful face. The lake ever received with tender love into her bosom those images of peace, and Harry saw and loved her still waters, when he and the Boots flew softly down and stood quietly upon the pebbly shore.

So they stood in this strange and silent land.

For a moment they spoke not a word—the spell of silence fell on their spirits with such potent influence; and then the Boots whispered softly to Harry, “This is Shadow-land!”

“It seems a sad name. I don’t know why,” replied Harry, with a sigh; “I am sure I have never been here, but somehow I seem to have seen it before.”

And a tiny breeze came across the lake without ruffling its placid face, and rustled almost inaudibly among the bending rushes by the shore, saying, with an answering sigh, “Yes! you have been here before!” and then it held its peace.

Harry did not seem surprised that the breeze spoke to him; in the stillness that reigned on all around everything had a voice, and a more eloquent one than ever he had heard in gay and busy Chattermuch Town. The silent voices of Shadow-land,—the fairy spirits of Fancy and Memory and Beauty,—could not be heard *there*. But they were the reigning fairy queens in this sad and peaceful land, and though Harry saw them not, he felt their influence, for they hovered perpetually around him, and touched all things with their fairy wands, so that in their silent way they, too, spoke. Nor did Harry inquire how and when he could have been here before,—it seemed rather a time for resting and thinking than for asking questions; and he and the Boots being weary, sat them down on the soft grass—almost grey in the twilight—close to the pebbly shore. As the evening hours stole on, the moon, as was often her wont, crept up beyond the dark forehead of the largest hill, and, looking down on the Lake, saluted her with sad eyes, but a gentle smile. The Lake replied, “So you have come! Bring out the

Stars!" and smiled too. And as she spoke, here and there stepped softly into the blue realms above the Moon's attendant maidens, each with its finger on its mouth and noiseless tread. Yet it seemed to Harry as though they sang, and he asked what the song was; and the Lake and the Moon and the Stars answered, "Hush! the Evening Hymn!" And this they chanted till the Moon had stepped high up into the vault of heaven.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BEAUTIFUL SHADOWS.

Now when the Moon had reached a place whence she could look down on all the scene beneath her, Harry was able to see more clearly all that was around him. The dark enfolding grey hills, the deep blue Lake, with its border fringes of long rushes, the sloping shore, with its round white pebbles and mossy banks, all displayed themselves with a soft distinctness that the blinding broad white light of day rarely bestows. Nor was this all, for I have said that this land was peopled with rare shadow-beings, who came to you if you would listen to them and show you cared for their company, but never could be sought. As Harry sat quietly on his moss-grown seat, he thought he heard a whisper

in the air, and, looking upwards, beheld a young maiden clad in grey, with a bright star on her forehead. So strange a being was she, that you could see through her form,—the Lake glistened through every fold of her soft garment,—yet she spoke in such a voice as Harry had never heard yet in all his travels.

“You have come a long way and seen all the world,” said she; “tell me, have you seen the one who loves me? He is always searching for me, but I cannot go to him.”

Harry replied that he had not, and tears glittered in her eyes; but the Boots replied, “The one who sought you knows now that you can never be found till he comes to live here in Shadow-land, and he has wedded another not like yourself, and thinks no more for the present of the ‘old likeness that once he knew.’”

The pure Shadow-maiden wept and stole noiselessly away. The Boots did not tell her that though her faithless lover had thus forgotten her fair form, his gaiety and his forgetfulness rarely made him glad.

But before they had ceased to think of her, the light semblance of a child danced towards them with apparent joyousness of heart, till Harry saw that it, too, was clad in grey, and had, in spite of its curly locks and fair round cheeks, a mournful expression, such as no child ever wore at play. The star, too, glittered on this little one's forehead. It was the sign of an immortal nature, and was worn by all.

"Tell me," said he, "where my long-lost companion is—the one I used to play with? He went away so long ago, and he has never come back. Where is he?"

Harry again said that he knew not; but the Boots answered, "I saw him not so long ago, in a busy city, poring over large volumes, at a desk, in a close narrow room, where the sunshine rarely comes. He often thinks of you."

"Ah! cannot you bring him here?" cried the little Child-shadow, with a wistful look. "I feel forgotten, and I am so lonely!"

"He will come to Shadow-land sometime soon," replied the Boots; "and then, be

sure of it, the first thing he will do will be to ask for you."

The Child-shadow looked more hopeful, but seemed as if he saw a shining vision that was a great way off, and while that light still shone in his eyes, a sudden flash like a shooting-star startled them, and a strange-shaped being, with a pale green body and rosy-red eyes, all radiant light, flew towards them, and cried, "Ah! these are *my* domains, you know; we must be gay, we must be merry, in spite of it all; come my Shadows, come and dance!"

And his eyes twinkled, and the strange being skipped and whirled about and sang, and finally danced again a wild weird dance among the rushes.

"Who is he?" asked Harry, more alarmed than pleased at the antics of the little gentleman, who seemed half mad.

"They call him Will-of-the-Wisp, sometimes, but he has another name, 'The Light of Joy.' His home is almost always here, though once or twice he has danced into the outer world. People have tried to secure

him, and to hold him fast, but they never can, he so rarely comes and is so swift to go."

And as he spoke, Mr. Will-of-the-Wisp fled into the middle of the Lake, and danced there on the water without causing a breath to stir its placid stillness; and his wild bright rosy reflection, contorted in a thousand ways, contrasted strangely with the pure white reflection of the pale-faced Moon.

"Always merry," whispered the Lake, dreamily; "don't you know that this is only Shadow-land?"

"Nevertheless," said Will, "it is more real than half the world yonder. I have been in it once or twice, but I could not stay! I longed for my companions the Shadows, and was not happy there."

"Tricksy sprite!" exclaimed the Moon, "you are too unstable."

"Perhaps I am," replied Will; "but still this is more my home than the big world, and I must stay here. Where are all my playmates? Come and dance!"

And as he spoke there stole from secluded nooks among the mountains—their quiet





‘BUT THE SHADOW HAD GONE.’—Page 189.

homes—a hundred flitting Shadows, each different, yet each lovely in face and form, and crowned with the glad star on their foreheads. One, surpassing most in his exquisite grace of shape and countenance, danced past Harry and the Boots with footsteps so swift and light, that they could scarcely discern his course,—how he came or where he went. Harry could not forbear uttering an exclamation, and said to the Boots, “It is so beautiful, that I must follow it! He must come with me and live in our world.”

But the Shadow had gone.

And the Boots replied, “That beautiful Shadow often pays visits there. He comes to the chambers of the poets and the studios of the painters, and they entreat of him to remain with them, sometimes with tears, that they may welcome him with their sweet songs, and paint him in fair colours, so that he may be seen and remembered in our world. But he never stays! Before they have time to talk to him, he is gone elsewhere, or else back to his home in

Shadow-land. He is one of the few Shadows who can wander so far, but he stays but a second, and then he flies away."

So Harry saw that it was useless to pursue that swift Shadow-spirit of beauty, which was so fleet-footed that he could not follow him with his eyes, and so strong that he never grew tired.

"It makes me sad," said Harry, "to see them here, and all alone. The little child,—see, there he is, dancing with the others in the very centre of the Lake,—he is not happy, for he has no other Child-shadow who loves him, and would play with him. He seems all alone."

"He is the childhood, the boy companion of the young man in the busy city; and now that they are separated, they can never meet again till the young man leaves our world, and comes through here on his way to another land filled with beauty and goodness."

Then the Boots told Harry that all the Shadows were sisters and brothers of the human beings in the world that he knew,

but that they were of such unearthly beauty, that they could not live there any more now, though one or two did come sometimes. "When a human being sighs," said the Boots, "he thinks of Shadow-land; and when he sees something lovely that he cannot describe, or feels sad, he scarcely knows why, it is because a Shadow has been for a moment standing near him."

"Why cannot the Shadows live any longer in the world," asked Harry, "when they could make people so happy by being always with them?"

"Because," answered the Boots, "the hearts of the human beings are not wholly good. The Shadows love them, and therefore they live as near as they can to them, but they can rarely speak to them; and all they can do is to stay in Shadow-land till the glad day comes when they can meet again, and go home happily together. And then they will cease to be Shadows clad in mournful grey."

"That's a long while, I think!" said Harry, with a sigh.

“ Yet it will come ! ” replied the Boots.

For a long time they rested there on the soft moss-banks close to the white-pebbled shore, and looked on the wild fantastic dance of the Shadows, which, led by the playful Will-of-the-Wisp, sped in sweeping circles over the still surface of the Lake. Not till the Moon became sleepy, and told them she was going to bed in her old corner behind the furthest grey hill, did they desist. Mr. Will-of-the-Wisp, who was always pert, threw a bulrush at her face, and exclaimed, “ That he never knew anybody who was so perpetually in the dolefuls ; ” but the Moon took no notice ; and as soon as she had tied on her night-cap, which was made of a dark purple cloud, she took a sudden dive, and was soon out of sight and asleep. The Lake, who was fond of her, became very dull and gloomy, and shone no longer with bright smiles and light glances. Her great companion was gone, and she felt alone. Therefore, she was sad, and said not a word. The Breeze, however, had more than ever to say for himself, and roamed about

here and there in his restless, fitful way, busy about nothing, yet speaking with a tender, low voice, which was sweet and musical. He came up to Harry and the Boots again, and said, "Still here! Why do you stay? Don't you feel melancholy? The Lake won't talk to us, and the Moon is gone away."

Harry replied that he thought he *did* feel melancholy now that the Breeze reminded him of it, and asked him "if *he* ever left Shadow-land and came into the great world?"

"Often," answered the Breeze; "but this is my home; and that is why, when I sing in the pine-tops and whisper among the fresh green leaves of the aspen-trees or the elms, that I make people sad. I remind them of Shadow-land. But *you* are not obliged to stay here, you know; indeed, I was surprised to see you, as I knew you were one of the beings belonging to the great world. Nobody but the Boots could have brought you, and you are here before your time. There is work for you to do

there, and you must go back. Yes, you must go back!"

And then he stole swiftly away among the rushes, and Harry heard him talking in the same low voice to them.

Presently there was a slight noise again behind them, and on looking round they beheld the little Child-shadow, with the beautiful face and wistful eyes. He held in his hands a faded wreath of cowslips and daisies and a branch of white May, and on one of the dried flowers there sat a dead butterfly, with snow-white wings, looking as though it were still alive and could fly again over the sweet green fields, as it was wont to do in those long-past summer hours. "These were my playthings," said he; "but only a few of them: I used to find them long ago in the meadows, which were full of flowers and beautiful things, and now the hawthorn tree has come to live here, for they cut it down to make a railway, and I went to it only an hour ago and it gave me this branch as a keepsake, and it is weary already with being in Shadow-land. I used to be happy

and play all day long in the lane where it used to grow. If I could only go back there again, and if it could only be all just as it was before!"

"Ah!" said the Boots, "that is not the big world's way. It is full of cruel changes, and is always sending people and things away to live in Shadow-land. But it is always trying to follow them and see them again,—yes, more, even more than you all here long to see them. For you are on your way home, but they are obliged to think of you, who are unattainable and happy, and harmless and good."

But the Child-shadow alone of all the lovely Shadow-spirits refused to be comforted, and mourned for his lost brother. His thoughts were always with the cowslip-wreaths and the rambles in the golden-hued meadows, and he saw them with that clear eye of childhood's memory which refuses ever to forget. Then the Boots took pity on him, and told him more than he had done before.

"You see those distant hills," said they,

pointing to the furthest range behind all the others; "if you look there for two or three days attentively, you will see a shining speck in the air. And as it advances you will see that it is a human being who has left the busy world, and is on his way home clothed in a white dress. And when it comes near you will see your old companion once more, and he will be more glad to see you even than you to see him, and you will together fly far away from Shadow-land, with a heart younger even and more happy than the little child's among the meadow-flowers."

And this made the little wistful Shadow-spirit so happy, that he threw away the dead flowers and thought of them no more, and danced joyfully away to welcome his old playmate, with his eyes fixed steadfastly upon the horizon bounded by the distant hills.

"The young man is sick of the world, and its beating life is ebbing fast within him," said the Boots; "and he thinks perpetually of the little Child-shadow, and that is why, no doubt, the little one thus longs to see him. He will soon be here, and then

there will be one Shadow less and one more happy human being."

Harry and the Boots looked at the retreating form of the Child-shadow till they could scarcely see him, and in a few more moments their vision was obscured by three graceful figures, which danced towards them over the Lake, chanting together a song so tender, beautiful, and plaintive, that they felt spell-bound, and presently there stood before them the three Fairy-spirits. They waved their magic wands around them, and they sang—

"Ah! wherefore beat with mournful plaint
The waves upon the lonely shore!
Ah! wherefore echoes back the sound
From cliff and headland evermore!"

At this Harry said, in a whisper, "But there are *no* waves!"

"Hush!" replied the Boots, "it's a poetical licence."

"What's that?" persisted Harry.

"A—well—a licence to say anything that comes into your head. For instance, if you wanted to speak of a tea-spoon you might

call it a sugar-mixer. It would be more poetical."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"Hush!" said the Boots. The Fairies went on—

"Sad voices yet more sweet than sad
Within the vault of heaven whirled,
That count the silent throbs which move
The worn face of the patient world.

"And then in Shadow-land there comes—"

"*Me!*" cried a lusty voice, accompanied by a far-spreading light—a golden light, whose beams spread everywhere. "It's me! Hide little Shadows, or I shall find you. I am *wide* awake." And peeping over the placid Lake, there rose and smiled the broad face of the shining Sun!—

CHAPTER XVII.

HOME AT LAST.

—It shone straight across Harry's little white bed, and by that bed stood his Mamma, and on it sat little Lily, with a cowslip ball in her dimpled hand. And she was in the act of saying, "Mamma, he is *wide* awake!"

A light seemed to break on Harry's mind, and he said, "Is tea ready?"

"Tea!" echoed his Mamma. "Tea!" exclaimed Eliza. "Well, Master Harry, I should just think it was! Well, sir, I hope you won't never go near that nasty brook again,—Oh, dear! and it all came of them horrid old *boots*!"

"Where are they?" asked Harry, immediately. "Don't you know they're the best Boots in the world?"

“Where are they?” cried old Eliza. “Why the gardener’s boy has got them; and much good they are to him, old down-at-heel things!”

“Fetch them instantly!” cried Harry. “Give him my little slippers—a new pair—*anything*—only let me have my dear old Boots again!”

“Go, nurse,” said his Mamma, who was evidently determined to humour Harry; and with a shrug of her shoulders and a muttered “wonder as to what things would come to when old boots were to be brought right up into the clean bed-rooms,” Eliza departed.

And when she was gone, Harry asked his Mamma where he had been all this long while, for he knew now that it was not the same day on which he had waded in the brook in the wood, with Eliza and his little sister sitting by. And his Mamma told him, as gently as might be, that “the big, ill-fitting boots had tripped him up, and he had hurt his forehead against a stone in the brook; and that Robert, who was passing by, had taken him home, quite sleepy and dripping, and

they had put him to bed. And there he had slept for hours and hours, till they had wondered if he was ever going to wake again, till Harry's Papa had sent for the Doctor, who said there wasn't much the matter with him, only when he awoke he was to take some physic—doctors always say that; so then he *had* awoke and—. Now, dear," said his Mamma, "I think you had better *take it!*"

Harry thought this a very commonplace ending to his wonderful journeys, and announced his intention of getting up soon and going to see his pony; but, meanwhile, as he *was* in bed, and had nothing particular to do, he gave his Mamma and little sister an account of his travels far away in the great world, and all the strange sights that he had seen.

While he was thus engaged, Eliza came in, and in her hand she held the identical pair Harry had found. The *very* same!

"Ah," said Harry, "I see they are nothing particular, after all, and I'm sure they can't be my dear old Boots, that

took me everywhere. *They were Fairy Boots !*"

Nevertheless, he seemed to like to look at them, probably for association's sake, though they were just like other old boots, and never hopped, nor proposed to go anywhere, nor said a word ; and so they were allowed, all dirty and all torn as they were, to remain standing quietly on the hearth-rug side by side.

And then Harry had his tea.

THE END.

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